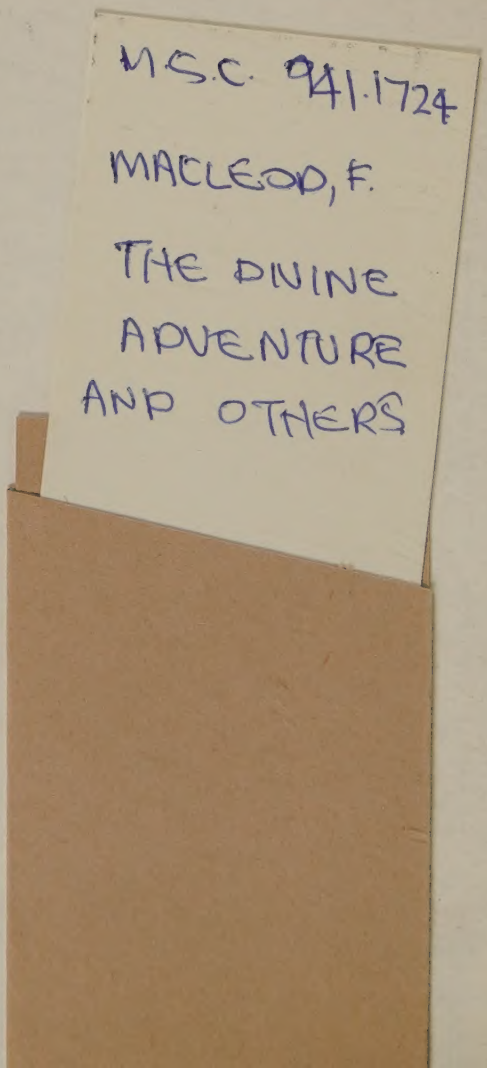
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*It is loveliness I seek, not lovely things.*

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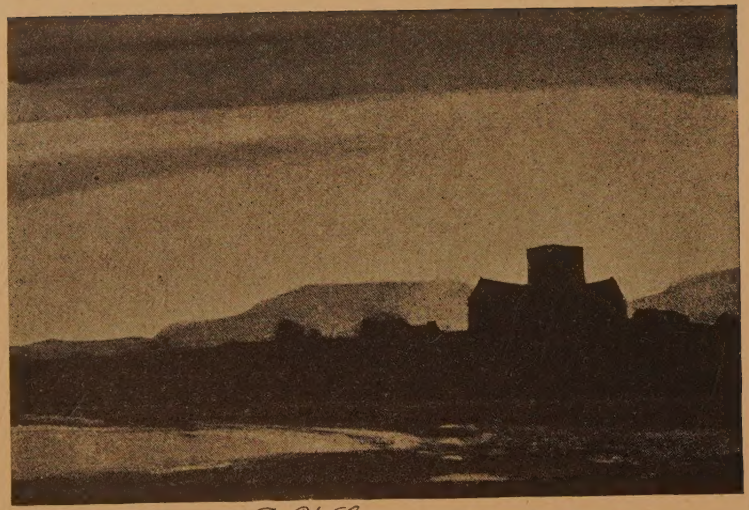

*From the original by D. Y. Cameron.*

*Iona Cathedral*

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# STUDIES IN SPIRITUAL HISTORY

BY

"FIONA MACLEOD"

(WILLIAM SHARP)

VOL IV

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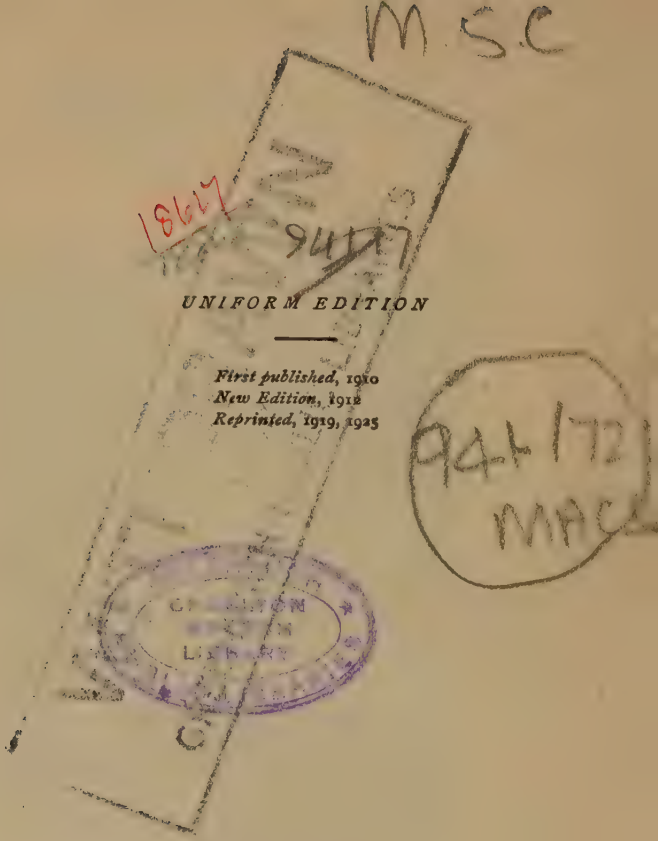

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THE WIND, SILENCE, AND LOVE

FRIENDS WHO HAVE TAUGHT ME MOST;

BUT SINCE, LONG AGO, TWO WHO ARE NOT FORGOTTEN

WENT AWAY UPON THE ONE, AND DWELL, THEMSELVES

REMEMBERING, IN THE OTHER, I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

TO

EALASAIDH

WHOSE LOVE AND SPIRIT LIVE HERE ALSO

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By Mrs. William Sharp

# THE DIVINE ADVENTURE

"*Let the beginning, I say, of this little book, as if it were some lamp, make it clear that a divine miracle was manifested.*"

*St. Adamnan*, Book II. c. I.

# The Divine Adventure

## I

"We were three: the Body, the Will, and the Soul. . . . The Will, the Soul, which for the first time had gone along outside of our common home, had to take upon themselves bodily presences likewise." —*The Divine Adventure.*

I remember that it was on St. John's Eve we said we would go away together for a time, but each independently, as three good friends. We had never been at one, though we had shared the same home, and had enjoyed so much in common; but to each, at the same time, had come the great desire of truth, than which there is none greater save that of beauty.

We had long been somewhat weary. No burden of years, no serious ills, no grief grown old in its own shadow, distressed us. We were young. But we had known the two great ends of life—to love and to suffer. In deep love there is always an inmost dark flame, as in the flame lit by a taper: I think

it is the obscure suffering upon which the Dancer lives. The Dancer!—Love, who is Joy, is a leaping flame: he it is who is the son of that fabled planet, the Dancing Star.

On that St. John's Eve we had talked with friends on the old mysteries of this day of pagan festival. At last we withdrew, not tired or in disagreement, but because the hidden things of the spirit are the only realities, and it seemed to us a little idle and foolish to discuss in the legend that which was not fortuitous or imaginary, since what then held up white hands in the moonlight, even now, in the moonlight of the dreaming mind, beckons to the Divine Forges.

We left the low-roofed cottage room, where, though the window was open, two candles burned with steadfast flame. The night was listeningly still. Beyond the fuchsia bushes a sighing rose, where a continuous foamless wave felt the silences of the shore. The moonpath, far out upon the bronze sea, was like a shadowless white road. In the dusk of the haven glimmered two or three red and green lights, where the fishing-cobles trailed motionless at anchor. Inland were shadowy hills. One of the St. John's Eve fires burned on the nearest of these, its cone blotting out a thousand eastern stars. The flame rose and

sank as though it were a pulse: perhaps at that great height the sea-wind or a mountain air played upon it. Out of a vast darkness in the south swung blacker abysses, where thunders breathed with a prolonged and terrible sighing; upon their flanks sheet-lightnings roamed.

There was no sound in the little bay. Beyond, a fathom of phosphorescence showed that mackerel were playing in the moonshine. Near the trap-ledges, which ran into deep water sheer from the goat-pastures, were many luminous moving phantoms: the medusæ, green, purple, pale blue, wandering shapes filled with ghostly fire.

We stood a while in silence, then one of us spoke:

"Shall we put aside, for a brief while, this close fellowship of ours; and, since we cannot journey apart, go together to find if there be any light upon those matters which trouble us, and perhaps discern things better separately than when trying, as we ever vainly do, to see the same thing with the same eyes?"

The others agreed. "It may be I shall know," said one. "It may be I shall remember," said the other.

"Then let us go back into the house and

rest to-night, and to-morrow, after we have slept and eaten well, we can set out with a light heart."

The others did not answer, for though to one food meant nothing, and to the other sleep was both a remembering and a forgetting, each unwittingly felt the keen needs of him whom they despised overmuch, and feared somewhat, and yet loved greatly.

## II

Thus it was that on a midsummer morning we set out alone and afoot, not bent for any one place, though we said we would go towards the dim blue hills in the west, the Hills of Dream, as we called them; but, rather, idly troubled by the very uncertainties which beset our going. We began that long stepping westward as pilgrims of old who had the Holy City for their goal, but knew that midway were perilous lands.

We were three, as I have said: the Body, the Will, and the Soul. It was strange for us to be walking there side by side, each familiar with and yet so ignorant of the other. We had so much in common, and yet were so incommunicably alien to one another.

I think that occurred to each of us, as, with brave steps but sidelong eyes, we passed the fuchsia bushes, where the wild bees hummed, and round by the sea pastures, where white goats nibbled among the yellow flags, and shaggy kine with their wild hill-eyes browsed the thyme-sweet salted grass. A fisherman met us. It was old Ian Macrae, whom I had known for many years. Somehow, till then, the thought had not come to me that it might seem unusual to those who knew my solitary ways, that I should be going to and fro with strangers. Then, again for the first time, it flashed across me that they were so like me—or save in the eyes I could myself discern no difference—the likeness would be as startling as it would be unaccountable.

I stood for a moment, uncertain. "Of course," I muttered below my breath, "of course, the others are invisible; I had not thought of that." I watched them slowly advance, for they had not halted when I did. I saw them incline the head with a grave smile as they passed Ian. The old man had taken off his bonnet to them, and had stood aside.

Strangely disquieted, I moved towards Macrae.

"Ian," I whispered rather than spoke.

"Ay," he answered simply, looking at me with his grave, far-seeing eyes.

"Ian, have you seen my friends before?"

"No, I have never seen them before."

"They have been here for—for—many days."

"I have not seen them."

"Tell me; do you recognise them?"

"I have not seen them before."

"I mean, do you—do you see any likeness in them to any you know?"

"No, I see no likeness."

"You are sure, Ian?"

"Ay, for sure. And why not?" The old fisherman looked at me with questioning eyes.

"Tell me, Ian, do you see any difference in me?"

"No, for sure, no."

Bewildered, I pondered this new mystery. Were we really three personalities, without as well as within?

At that moment the Will turned. I heard his voice fall clearly along the heather-fragrant air-ledges.

"We, too, are bewildered by this mystery," he said.

So he knew my thought. It was *our* thought. Yes, for now the Soul turned also;

and I heard his sunwarm breath come across the honeysuckles by the roadside.

"I, too, am bewildered by this mystery," he said.

"Ian," I exclaimed to the old man, who stared wonderingly at us; "Ian tell me this: what like are my companions; how do they seem to you?"

The old man glanced at me, startled, then rubbed his eyes as though he were half-awakened from a dream.

"Why are you asking that thing?"

"Because, Ian, you do not see any likeness in them to myself. I had thought—I had thought they were so like."

Macrae put his wavering, wrinkled hand to his withered mouth. He gave a chuckling laugh.

"Ah, I understand now. It is a joke you are playing on old Ian."

"Maybe ay, and maybe no, Ian; but I do want to know how they seem to you, those two yonder."

"Well, well, now, for sure, that friend of yours there, that spoke first, he is just a weary, tired old man, like I am myself, and so like me, now that I look at him, that he might be my wraith. And the other, he is a fine lad, a fisher-lad for sure, though I fear

God's gripped his heart, for I see the old ancient sorrow in his eyes."

I stared: then suddenly I understood.

"Good-day, Ian," I added hurriedly, "and the blessing of Himself be upon you and yours, and upon the nets and the boats."

Then I moved slowly towards my companions, who awaited me. I understood now. The old fisherman had seen after his own kind. The Will, the Soul, which for the first time had journeyed outside our common home, had to take upon themselves bodily presences likewise. But these wavering images were to others only the reflection of whoso looked upon them. Old Ian had seen his own tired self and his lost youth. With a new fear the Body called to us, and we to him; and we were one, yet three; and so we went onward together.

## III

We were silent. It is not easy for three, so closely knit, so intimate, as we had been for so many years, suddenly to enter upon a new comradeship, wherein three that had been as one were now several. A new reticence had come to each of us. We walked

in silence — conscious of the beauty of the day, in sea and sky and already purpling moors; of the white gulls flecking the azure, and the yellowhammers and stonechats flitting among the gorse and fragrant bog-myrtle— we knew that none was inclined to speak. Each had his own thoughts.

The three dreamers—for so we were in that lovely hour of dream—walked steadfastly onward. It was not more than an hour after noon that we came to an inlet of the sea, so narrow that it looked like a stream, only that a salt air arose between the irises which thickly bordered it, and that the sunken rock-ledges were fragrant with sea-pink and the stone-convolvulus. The moving tidal water was grass-green, save where dusked with long, mauve shadows.

"Let us rest here," said the Body. "It is so sweet in the sunlight, here by this cool water."

The Will smiled as he threw himself down upon a mossy slope that reached from an oak's base to the pebbly margins.

"It is ever so with you," he said, still smiling. "You love rest, as the wandering clouds love the waving hand of the sun."

"What made you think of that?" asked the Soul abruptly, who till that moment had

been rapt in silent commune with his inmost thoughts.

"Why do you ask?"

"Because I, too, was thinking that just as the waving hand of the sun beckons the white wandering clouds, as a shepherd calls to his scattered sheep, so there is a hand waving to us to press forward. Far away, yonder, a rainbow is being woven of sun and mist. Perhaps, there, we may come upon that which we have come out to see."

"But the Body wishes to rest. And, truly, it is sweet here in the sunflood, and by this moving green water, which whispers in the reeds and flags, and sings its own sea-song the while."

"Let us rest, then."

And, as we lay there, a great peace came upon us. There were hushed tears in the eyes of the Soul, and a dreaming smile upon the face of the Will, and, in the serene gaze of the Body, a content that was exceeding sweet. It was so welcome to lie there and dream. We knew a rare happiness in that exquisite quietude.

After a time, the Body rose, and moved to the water-edge.

"It is so lovely," he said, "I must bathe"

—and with that he threw aside his clothes, and stood naked among the reeds and yellow flags which bordered the inlet.

The sun shone upon his white body, the colour of pale ivory. A delicate shadow lightly touched him, now here, now there, from the sunlit green sheaths and stems among which he stood. He laughed out of sheer joy, and raised his arms, and made a splashing with his trampling feet.

Looking backward with a blithe glance, he cried:

"After all, it is good to be alive: neither to think nor to dream, but just content *to be*."

Receiving no answer, he laughed merrily, and, plunging forward, swam seaward against the sun-dazzle.

His two companions watched him with shining eyes.

"Truly, he is very fair to look upon," said the Soul.

"Yes," added the Will, "and perhaps he has chosen the better part elsewhere as here."

"Can it be the better part to prefer the things of the moment of those of Eternity?"

"What is Eternity?"

For a few seconds the Soul was silent. It was not easy for him to understand that

what was a near horizon to him was a vague vista, possibly a mirage, to another. He was ever, in himself, moving just the hither side of the narrow mortal horizon which Eternity swims in upon from behind and beyond. The Will looked at him questioningly, then spoke again :

"You speak of the things of Eternity. What is Eternity?"

"Eternity is the Breath of God."

"That tells me nothing."

"It is Time, freed from his Mortality."

"Again, that tells me little. Or, rather, I am no wiser. What is Eternity to *us?*"

"It is our perpetuity."

"Then is it only a warrant against Death?"

"No, it is more. Time is our sphere : Eternity is our home."

"There is no other lesson for you in the worm, and in the dust?

"What do you mean, brother?"

"Does dissolution mean nothing to you?"

"What is dissolution?"

It was now the Will who stared with wondering eyes. To him that question was as disquieting as that which he had asked the Soul. It was a minute before he spoke again.

"You ask me what is dissolution? Do

you not understand what death means to *me?*"

"Why to you more than to me, or to the Body?"

"What is it to you?"

"A change from a dream of Beauty, to Beauty."

"And at the worst?"

"Freedom: escape from narrow walls—often dark and foul."

"In any case nothing but a change, a swift and absolute change, from what was to what is?"

"Even so."

"And you have no fear?"

"None. Why should I?"

"Why should you not?"

Again there was a sudden silence between the two. At last the Soul spoke:

"Why should I not?" I cannot tell you. But I have no fear. I am a Son of God."

"And we?"

"Ah, yes, dear brother: you, too, and the Body."

"But we perish!"

"There is the resurrection of the Body."

"Where—when?"

"As it is written. In God's hour."

"Is the worm also the Son of God?"

The soul stared downward into the green water, but did not answer. A look of strange trouble was in his eyes.

"Is not the Grave on the hither side of Eternity?"

Still no answer.

"Does God whisper beneath the Tomb?"

At this the Soul rose, and moved restlessly to and fro.

"Tell me," resumed the Will, "what is Dissolution?"

"It is the returning into dust of that which was dust."

"And what is dust?"

"The formless: the inchoate: the mass out of which the Potter makes new vessels, or moulds new shapes."

"But *you* do not go into dust?"

"I came from afar: afar I go again."

"But we—we shall be formless: inchoate?"

"You shall be upbuilded."

"How?"

The Soul turned, and again sat by his comrade.

"I know not," he said simply.

"But if the Body go back to the dust, and the life that is in him be blown out like a wavering flame; and if you who came from

afar, again return afar; what, then, for me, who am neither an immortal spirit nor yet of this frail human clan?"

"God has need of you."

"When—where?"

"How can I tell what I cannot even surmise?"

"Tell me, tell me this: if I am so wedded to the Body that, if he perish, I perish also, what resurrection can there be for me?"

"I do not know."

"Is it a resurrection for the Body if, after weeks, or years, or scores of years, his decaying dust is absorbed into the earth, and passes in a chemic change into the living world?"

"No: that is not a resurrection: that is a transmutation."

"Yet that is all. There is nothing else possible. Dust unto dust. As with the Body, so with the mind, the spirit of life, that which I am, the Will. In the Grave there is no fretfulness any more: neither any sorrow, or joy, or any thought, or dream, or fear, or hope whatsoever. Hath not God Himself said it, through the mouth of His prophet?"

"I do not understand," murmured the Soul, troubled.

"Because the Grave is not your portion."

"But I, too, must know Death!"

"Yes, truly—a change what was it?—a change from a dream of Beauty, to Beauty!"

"God knows I would that we could go together—you, and he yonder, and I; or, if that cannot be, he being wholly mortal, then at the least you and I."

"But we cannot. At least, so it seems to us. But I—I too am alive, I too have dreams and visions, I too have joys and hopes, I too have despairs. And for me—*nothing*. I am, at the end, as a blown flame."

"It may not be so. Something has whispered to me at times that you and I are to be made one."

"Tell me: can the immortal wed the mortal?"

"No."

"Then how can we two wed, for I am mortal. My very life depends on the Body. A falling branch, a whelming wave, a sudden ill, and in a moment that which was is not. He, the Body, is suddenly become inert, motionless, cold, the perquisite of the Grave, the sport of the maggot and the worm: and I—I am a subsided wave, a vanished spiral of smoke, a little fugitive wind-eddy abruptly ended."

"You know not what is the end any more than I do. In a moment we are translated."

"Ah, is it so with you? O Soul, I thought that you had a profound surety!"

"I know nothing: I believe."

"Then it may be with you as with us?"

"I know little: I believe."

"When I am well I believe in new, full, rich, wonderful life—in life in the spiritual as well as the mortal sphere. And the Body, when he is ill, he, too, thinks of that which is your heritage. But if *you* are not sure—if *you* know nothing—may it not be that you, too, have fed upon dreams, and have dallied with Will-o'-the-wisp, and are an idle-blown flame even as I am, and have only a vaster spiritual outlook? May it not be that you, O Soul, are but a spiritual nerve in the dark, confused, brooding mind of Humanity? May it not be that you and I and the Body go down unto one end?"

"Not so. There is the word of God."

"We read it differently."

"Yet the Word remains."

"You believe in the immortal life?—You believe in Eternity?"

"Yes."

"Then what is Eternity?"

"Already you have asked me that!"

"You believe in Eternity. What is Eternity?"

"Continuity."

"And what are the things of Eternity?"

"Immortal desires."

"Then what need for us who are mortal to occupy ourselves with what must be for ever beyond us?"

Thereat, with a harsh laugh, the Will arose, and throwing his garments from him, plunged into the sunlit green water, with sudden cries of joy calling to the Body, who was still rejoicefully swimming in the sun-dazzle as he breasted the tide.

An hour later we rose, and, silent again, once more resumed our way.

## IV

It was about the middle of the afternoon that we moved inland, because of a difficult tract of cliff and bouldered shore. We followed the course of a brown torrent, and were soon under the shadow of the mountain. The ewes and lambs made incessantly that mournful crying, which in mountain solitudes falls from ledge to ledge as though it were no other than the ancient sorrow of the hills.

Thence we emerged, walking among boulders green with moss and grey with lichen, often isled among bracken and shadowed by the wind-wavering birches, or the finger-leafed rowans already heavy with clusters of ruddy fruit. Sometimes we spoke of things which interested us : of the play of light and shadow in the swirling brown torrent along whose banks we walked, and by whose grayling-haunted pools we lingered often, to look at the beautiful shadowy unrealities of the perhaps not less shadowy reality which they mirrored : of the solemn dusk of the pines ; of the mauve shadows which slanted across the scanty corn that lay in green patches beyond lonely crofts ; of the travelling purple phantoms of phantom clouds, to us invisible, over against the mountain-breasts ; of a solitary seamew, echoing the wave in that inland stillness.

All these things gave us keen pleasure. The Body often laughed joyously, and talked of chasing the shadow till it should turn and leap into him, and he be a wild creature of the woods again, and be happy, knowing nothing but the incalculable hour. It is an old belief of the Gaelic hill-people.

"If one yet older be true," said the Will,

speaking to the Soul, "you and Shadow are one and the same. Nay, the mystery of the Trinity is symbolised here again—as in us three; for there is an ancient forgotten word of an ancient forgotten people, which means alike the Breath, the Shadow, and the Soul."[1]

As we walked onward we became more silent. It was about the sixth hour from noon that we saw a little coast-town lying amid green pastures, overhung, as it seemed, by the tremulous blue band of the sea-line. The Body was glad, for here were friends, and he wearied for his kind. The Will and the Soul, too, were pleased, for now they shared the common lot of mortality, and knew weariness as well as hunger and thirst. So we moved towards the blue smoke of the homes.

"The home of a wild dove, a branch swaying in the wind, is sweet to it; and the green bracken under a granite rock is home to a tired hind; and so we, who are wayfarers idler than these, which blindly obey the law, may well look to yonder village as our home for to-night."

So spoke the Soul.

The Body laughed blithely. "Yes," he

[1] The Aztec word *Ehecatl*, which signifies alike the Wind (or Breath), Shadow, and Soul.

added, "it is a cheerier home than the green bracken. Tell me, have you ever heard of The Three Companions of Night?"

"The Three Companions of Night? I would take them to be Prayer, and Hope, and Peace."

"So says the Soul—but what do *you* say, O Will?"

"I would take them to be Dream, and Rest, and Longing."

"We are ever different," replied the Body, with a sigh, "for the Three Companions of whom I speak are Laughter, and Wine, and Love."

"Perhaps we mean the same thing," muttered the Will, with a smile of bitter irony.

We thought much of these words as we passed down a sandy lane hung with honeysuckles, which were full of little birds who made a sweet chittering.

Prayer, and Hope, and Peace; Dream, and Rest, and Longing; Laughter, and Wine, and Love: were these analogues of the Heart's Desire?

When we left the lane, where we saw a glow-worm emitting a pale fire as he moved through the green dusk in the shadow of the hedge, we came upon a white devious road. A young man stood by a pile of stones. He

stopped his labour and looked at us. One of us spoke to him.

"Why is it that a man like yourself, young and strong, should be doing this work, which is for broken men?"

"Why are you breathing?" he asked abruptly.

"We breathe to live," answered the Body, smiling blithely.

"Well, I break stones to live."

"Is it worth it?"

"It's better than death."

"Yes," said the Body slowly, "it is better than death."

"Tell me," asked the Soul, "why is it better than death?"

"Who wants not to want?"

"Ah—it is the need to want, then, that is strongest!"

The stone-breaker looked sullenly at the speaker.

"If you're not anxious to live," he said, "will you give me what money you have? It is a pity good money should be wasted. I know well where I would be spending it this night of the nights," he added abruptly in Gaelic.

The Body looked at him with curious eyes.

"And where would you be spending it?" he asked, in the same language.

"This is the night of the marriage of John Macdonald, the rich man from America, who has come back to his own town, and is giving a big night of it to all his friends, and his friends' friends."

"Is that the John Macdonald who is marrying Elsie Cameron?" demanded the Body eagerly.

"Ay, the same; though it may be the other daughter of Alastair Rua, the girl Morag."

A flush rose to the face of the Body. His eyes sparkled.

"It is Elsie," he said to the man.

"Belike," the stone-breaker muttered indifferently.

"Do you know where Alastair Rua and his daughters are?"

"Yes, at Beann Marsanta Macdonald's big house of the One-Ash Farm."

"Can you show me the way?"

"I'm going that way."

Thereat the Body turned to his comrades:

"I love her," he said simply; "I love Morag Cameron."

"She is not for your loving," answered the Will sharply; "for she has given troth to old Archibald Sinclair."

The Body laughed.

"Love is love," he said lightly.

"Come," interrupted the Soul wearily; "we have loitered long enough. Let us go."

We stood looking at the stone-breaker, who was gazing curiously at us. Suddenly he laughed.

"Why do you laugh?" asked the Soul.

"Well, I'm not for knowing that. But I'll tell you this: if you two wish to go into the town, you have only to follow this road. And if *you* want to come to One-Ash Farm, then you must come this other way with me."

"Do not go," whispered the Soul.

But the Body, with an impatient gesture, drew aside. "Leave me," he added: "I wish to go with this man. I will meet you to-morrow morning at the first bridge to the westward of the little town yonder, just where the stream slackens over the pebbles."

With reluctant eyes the two companions saw their comrade leave. For a long time the Will watched him with a bitter smile. Redeeming love was in the longing eyes of the Soul.

When the Body and the stone-breaker were alone, as they walked towards the distant farm-steading, where already were lights, and whence came a lowing of kye in the byres,

for it was the milking hour, they spoke at intervals.

"Who were those with you?" asked the man.

"Friends. We have come away together."

"What for?"

"Well, as you would say, to see the world."

"To see the world?" The man laughed. "To see the world! Have you money?"

"Enough for our needs."

"Then you will see nothing. The world gives to them that already have, an' more than have."

"What do you hope for to-night?"

"To be drunk."

"That is a poor thing to hope for. Better to think of the laugh and the joke by the fireside; and of food and drink, too, if you will: of the pipes, and dancing, and pretty girls."

"Do as you like. As for me, I hope to be drunk."

"Why?"

"Why? Because I'll be another man then. I'll have forgotten all that I now remember from sunrise to sundown. Can you think what it is to break a hope in your heart each time you crack a stone on the roadside?

That's what I am, a stone-breaker, an' I crack stones inside as well as outside. It's a stony place my heart, God knows."

"You are young to speak like that, and you speak like a man who has known better days."

"Oh, I'm ancient enough," said the man, with a short laugh.

"What meaning does that have?"

"What meaning? Well, it just means this, that I'm as old as the Bible. For there's mention o' me there. Only there I'm herding swine, an' here I'm breaking stones."

"And is *your* father living?"

"Ay, he curses me o' Sabbaths."

"Then it's not the same as the old story that is in the Bible?"

"Oh, nothing's the same an' everything's the same—except when you're drunk, an' then it's only the same turned outside in. But see, yonder's the farm. Take my advice, an' drink. It's better than the fireside, it's better than food, it's better than kisses, ay it's better than love, it's as good as hate, an' it's the only thing you can drown in except despair."

Soon after this the Body entered the house of the Beann Marsanta Macdonald, and with laughter and delight met Morag Cameron, and others whom his heart leaped to see.

At midnight, the Will sat in a room in a little inn, and read out of two books, now out of one, now out of the other. The one was the Gaelic Bible, the other was in English and was called *The One Hope.*

He rose, as the village clock struck twelve, and went to the window. A salt breath, pungent with tide-stranded seaweed, reached him. In the little harbour, thin shadowy masts ascended like smoke and melted. A green lantern swung from one. The howling of a dog rose and fell. A faint lapping of water was audible. On a big fishing-coble some men were laughing and cursing.

Overhead was an oppressive solemnity. The myriad stars were as the incalculable notes of a stilled music, become visible in silence. It was a relief to look into unlighted deeps.

"These idle lances of God pierce the mind, slay the spirit," the Will murmured, staring with dull anger at the white multitude.

"If the Soul were here," he added bitterly, "he would look at these glittering mockeries as though they were harbingers of eternal hope. To me they are whited sepulchres. They say *we live*, to those who die; they say *God endures*, to Man that perisheth; they whisper the Immortal Hope to Mortality." Turning, he

went back to where he had left the books. He lifted one, and read :—

"*Have we not the word of God Himself that Time and Chance happeneth to all : that soon or late we shall all be caught in a net, we whom Chance hath for his idle sport, and upon whom Time trampleth with impatient feet ? Verily, the rainbow is not more frail, more fleeting, than this drear audacity.*"

With a sigh he put the book down, and lifted the other. Having found the page he sought, he read slowly aloud :—

"*. . . but Time and Chance happeneth to them all. For man also knoweth not his time : as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, even so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.*"

He went to the window again, brooding darkly. A slight sound caught his ear. He saw a yellow light run out, leap across the pavement and pass like a fan of outblown flame. Then the door closed, and we heard a step on the stone flags. He looked down. The Soul was there.

"Are you restless ? Can you not sleep ?" he asked.

"No, dear friend. But my heart is weary because of the Body. Yet before I go, let me

bid you read that which follows upon what you have just read. It is not only Time and Chance upon which to dwell ; but upon this, that God knows that which He does, and the hour and the way, and sees the end in the beginning."

And while the Soul moved softly down the little windy street, the Will opened the Book again, and read as the Soul had bidden.

"It may be so," he muttered, "it may be that the dreamer may yet wake to behold his dream—'As thou knowest not what is the way of the wind, even so thou knowest not the work of God Who doeth all.'"

With that he sighed wearily, and then, afraid to look again at the bitter eloquence of the stars, lit a candle as he lay down on his bed, and watched the warm companionable flame till sleep came upon him, and he dreamed no more of the rue and cypress, but plucked amaranths in the moonshine.

Meanwhile the Soul walked swiftly to the outskirts of the little town, and out by the grassy links where clusters of white geese huddled in sleep, and across the windy common where a tethered ass stood, with drooping head, his long, twitching ears now motionless. In the moonlight, the shadow of the weary animal stretched to fantastic lengths,

and at one point, when the startled Soul looked at it, he beheld the shadow of the Cross.

When he neared One-Ash Farm he heard a loud uproar from within. Many couples were still dancing, and the pipes and a shrill flute added to the tumult. Others sang and laughed, or laughed and shouted, or cursed hoarsely. Through the fumes of smoke and drink rippled women's laughter.

He looked in at a window, with sad eyes. The first glance revealed to him the Body, his blue eyes aflame, his face flushed with wine, his left arm holding close to his heart a bright winsome lass, with hair dishevelled, and wild eyes, but with a wonderful laughing eagerness of joy.

In vain he called. His voice was suddenly grown faint. But what the ear could not hear, the heart heard. The Body rose abruptly.

"I will drink no more," he said.

A loud insensate laugh resounded near him. The stone-breaker lounged heavily from a bench, upon the servant's table.

"I am drunk now, my friend," the man cried with flaming eyes. "I am drunk, an' now I am as reckless as a king, an' as serene as the Pope, an' as heedless as God."

The Soul turned his gaze and looked at him. He saw a red flame rising from grey ashes. The ashes were his heart. The flame was his impotent, perishing life.

Stricken with sorrow, the Soul went to the door, and entered. He went straight to the stone-breaker, who was now lying with head and arms prone on the deal table.

He whispered in the drunkard's ear. The man lifted his head, and stared with red, brutish eyes.

"What is that?" he cried.

"Your mother was pure and holy. She died to give you her life. What will it be like on the day she asks for it again?"

The man raised an averting arm. There was a stare of horror in his eyes.

"I know you, you devil. Your name is Conscience."

The Soul looked at the Speaker. "I do not know," he answered simply; "but I believe in God."

"In the love of God?"

"In the love of God."

"He dwells everywhere?"

"Everywhere."

"Then I will find Him, I will find His love, *here*"—and with that the man raised the deathly spirit to his lips again, and again

drank. Then, laughing and cursing, he threw the remainder at the feet of his unknown friend.

"Farewell!" he shouted hoarsely, so that those about him stared at him and at the newcomer.

The Soul turned sadly and looked for his strayed comrade, but he was nowhere to be seen. In a room upstairs that friend whom he loved was whispering eager vows of sand and wind; and the girl Morag, clinging close to him, tempted him as she herself was tempted, so that both stood in that sand, and in the intertangled hair of each that wind blew.

The Soul saw, and understood. None spoke to him, a stranger, as he went slowly from the house, though all were relieved when that silent, sad-eyed foreigner withdrew.

Outside, the cool sea-wind fell freshly upon him. He heard a corncrake calling harshly to his mate, where the corn was yellowing in a little stone-dyked field; and a night-jar creening forward on a juniper, uttering his whirring love-note; and he blessed their sweet, innocent lust. Then, looking upward, he watched for a while the white procession of the stars. They were to him the symbolic signs of the mystery of God. He bowed his

head. "Dust of the world," he muttered humbly, "dust of the world."

Moving slowly by the house—so doubly noisy, so harshly discordant, against the large, serene, nocturnal life—he came against the gable of an open window. On the ledge lay a violin, doubtless discarded by some reveller. The Soul lifted it, and held it up to the night-wind. When it was purified, and the vibrant wood was as a nerve in that fragrant darkness, he laid it on his shoulder and played softly.

What was it that he played? Many heard it, but none knew what the strain was, or whence it came. The Soul remembered, and played. It is enough.

The soft playing stole into the house as though it were the cool sea-wind, as though it were the flowing dusk. Beautiful, unfamiliar sounds, and sudden silences passing sweet, filled the rooms. The last guests left hurriedly, hushed, strangely disquieted. The dwellers in the farmstead furtively bade good-night, and slipt away.

For an hour, till the sinking of the moon, the Soul played. He played the Song of Dreams, the Song of Peace, the three Songs of Mystery. The evil that was in the house ebbed. Everywhere, at his playing, the secret

obscure life awoke. Nimble aerial creatures swung, invisibly passive, in the quiet dark. From the brown earth, from hidden sanctuaries in rocks and trees, green and grey lives slid, and stood intent. Out of the hillside came those of old. There were many eager voices, like leaves lapping in a wind. The wild-fox lay down, with red tongue lolling idly: the stag rose from the fern, with dilated nostrils; the night-jar ceased, the corncrake ceased, the moon-wakeful thrushes made no single thrilling note. The silence deepened. Sleep came stealing softly out of the obscure, swimming dusk. There was not a swaying reed, a moving leaf. The strange company of shadows stood breathless. Among the tree-tops the loosened stars shone terribly—lonely fires of silence.

The Soul played. Once he thought of the stone-breaker. He played into his heart. The man stirred, and tears oozed between his heavy lids. It was his mother's voice that he heard, singing low a cradle-sweet song, and putting back her white hair that she might look earthward to her love. "Grey sweetheart, grey sweetheart," he moaned. Then his heart lightened, and a moonlight of peace hallowed that solitary waste place.

Again, at the last, the Soul thought of his comrade, heavy with wine in the room overhead, drunken with desire. And to him he played the imperishable beauty of Beauty, the Immortal Love, so that, afterwards, he should remember the glory rather than the shame of his poor frailty. What he played to the girl's heart only those women know who hear the whispering words of Mary the Mother in sleep, when a second life breathes beneath each breath.

When he ceased, deep slumber was a balm upon all. He fell upon his knees and prayed.

"Beauty of all Beauty," he prayed, "let none perish without thee."

It was thus that we three, who were one, realised how Prayer and Hope and Peace, how Dream and Rest and Longing, how Laughter and Wine and Love, are in truth but shadowy analogues of the Heart's Desire.

## V

At dawn we woke. A movement of gladness was in the lovely tides of morning—delicate green, and blue, and gold. The spires of the grasses were washed in dew; the innumerous was as one green flower that had lain all night in the moonshine.

We had agreed to meet at the bridge over the stream where it lapsed through gravelly beaches just beyond the little town.

There the Soul and the Will long awaited the Body. The sun was an hour risen, and had guided a moving multitude of gold and azure waters against the long reaches of yellow-poppied sand, and to the bases of the great cliffs, whose schist shone like chrysolite, and whose dreadful bastions of black basalt loomed in purple shadow, like suspended thunder-clouds on a windless afternoon.

The air was filled with the poignant sweetness of the loneroid or bog-myrtle, meadow-sweet, and white wild-roses. The green smell of the bracken, the delicate woodland odour of the mountain-ash, floated hitherward and thitherward on the idle breath of the wind, sunwarm when it came across the sea-pinks and thyme-set grass, cool and fresh when it eddied from the fern-coverts, or from the heather above the hillside-boulders where the sheep lay, or from under the pines at the bend of the sea-road where already the cooing of grey doves made an indolent sweetness.

The Soul was silent. He had not slept, but, after his playing in the dark, peace had come to him.

Before dawn he had gone into the room

where the Will lay, and had looked long at his comrade. In sleep the Will more resembled him, as when awake he the more resembled the Body. A deep pity had come upon the Soul for him whom he loved so well, but knew so little.

Why was it, he wondered, that he felt less alien from the Body? Why was it that this strange, potent, inscrutable being, whom both loved, should be so foreign to each? The Body feared him. As for himself, he, too, feared him at times. There were moments when all his marvellous background of the immortal life shrank before the keen gaze of his friend, Was it possible that Mind could have a life apart from mortal substances? Was it possible? If so——

It was here that the Will awoke, and smiled at his friend.

He gave no greeting, but answered his thought.

"Yes," he said gravely, and as though continuing an argument, "it is impossible, if you mean the mortal substance of our brother, the Body. But yet not without material substance. May it not be that the Mind may have an undreamed-of shaping power, whereby it can instantly create?"

"Create what?"

"A new environment for it's need? Drown it in the deepest gulfs of the sea, and it will, at the moment it is freed from the body, sheathe itself in a like shape, and habit itself with free spaces of air, so that it may breathe, and live, and emerge into the atmosphere, there to take on a new shape, to involve itself in new circumstances, to live anew?"

"It is possible. But would that sea-change leave the mind the same or another?"

"The Mind would come forth one and incorruptible."

"If in truth, the Mind be an indivisible essence?"

"Yes, if the mind be one and indivisible."

"You believe it so?"

"Tell me, are you insubstantial? You, yourself, below this accident of mortality?"

"I know not what you mean."

"You were wondering if, after all, it were possible for me to have a life, a conscious, individual continuity, apart from this mortal substance in which you and I now share—counterparts of that human home we both love and hate, that moving tent of the Illimitable, which at birth appears a speck on sands of the Illimitable, and at death again abruptly disappears. You were wondering this. But, tell me: have you yourself never

wondered how you can exist, as yourself, apart from something of this very actuality, this form, this materialism to which you find yourself so alien in the Body?"

"I am spirit. I am a breath."

"But you are you?"

"Yes, I am I."

"The surpassing egotism is the same, whether in you, the Soul, who are but a breath; or in me, the Will, who am but a condition; or in our brother, the Body, a claimant to Eternal Life while perishing in his mortality!"

"I live in God. Whence I came, thither shall I return."

"A breath?"

"It may be."

"Yet you shall be you?"

"Yes; I."

"Then that breath which will be you must have form, even as the Body must have form."

"Form is but the human formula for the informulate."

"Nay, Form *is* life."

"You have ever one wish, it seems to me, O Will: to put upon me the heavy yoke of mortality."

"Not so: but to lift it from myself."

"And the Body?"

"Where did you leave him last night?"

"You remember what he said about the Three Companions of Night: Laughter, and Wine, and Love? I left him with these."

"They are also called Tears, and Weariness, and the Grave. He has his portion. Perhaps he does well. Death intercepts many retributions."

"He, too, has his dream within a dream."

"Yes, you played to it, in the silence and the darkness."

"You heard my playing—you here, I there?"

"I heard."

"And did you sleep or wake, comforted?"

"I heard a Wind. I have heard it often. I heard, too, my own voice singing in the dark."

"What was the song?"

"This:—

> In the silences of the woods
> I have heard all day and all night
> The moving multitudes
> Of the Wind in flight.
> He is named Myriad:
> And I am sad
> Often, and often I am glad;
> But oftener I am white
> With fear of the dim broods
> That are his multitudes."

"And then, when you had heard that song?"

"There was a rush of wings. My hair streamed behind me. Then a sudden stillness, out of which came moonlight; and a star fell slowly through the dark, and as it passed my face I felt lips pressed against mine, and it seemed to me that you kissed me."

"And when I kissed you, did I whisper any word?"

"You whispered: '*I am the Following Love.*'"

"And you knew then that it was the Breath of God, and you had deep peace, and slept?"

"I knew that it was the Following Love,—that is the Breath of God, and I had deep peace, and I slept."

The Soul crossed from the window to the bed, and stooped, and kissed the Will.

"Beloved," he whispered, "the star was but a dewdrop of the Peace that passeth understanding. And can it be that to you, to whom the healing dew was vouchsafed, shall be denied the water-springs?"

"Ah, beautiful dreamer of dreams, bewilder me no more with your lovely sophistries. See, it is already late, and we have to meet

the Body at the shore-bridge over the little stream !"

It was then that the two, having had a spare meal of milk and new bread, left the inn, and went, each communing with his own thoughts, to the appointed place.

They heard the Body before they saw him, for he was singing as he came. It was a strange, idle fragment of a song—"The Little Children of the Wind"—a song that someone had made, complete in its incompleteness, as a wind-blown blossom, and, as a blossom discarded by a flying bird, thrown heedlessly on the wayside by its unknown wandering singer :—

> I hear the little children of the wind
> Crying solitary in lonely places :
> I have not seen their faces,
> But I have seen the leaves eddying behind,
> The little tremulous leaves of the wind.

The Soul looked at the Will.

"So he, too, has heard the Wind," he said softly.

## VI

All that day we journeyed westward. Sometimes we saw, far off, the pale blue

films of the Hills of Dream, those elusive mountains towards which our way was set. Sometimes they were so startlingly near that, from gorse upland or inland valley, we thought we saw the shadow-grass shake in the wind's passage, or smelled the thyme still wet with dew where it lay under the walls of mountain-boulders. But at noon we were no nearer than when, at sunrise, we had left the little sea-town behind us: and when the throng of bracken-shadows filled the green levels between the fern and the pines—like flocks of sheep following fantastic herdsmen—the Hills of the West were still as near, and as far, as the bright raiment of the rainbow which the shepherd sees lying upon his lonely pastures.

But long before noon we were glad because of what happened to one of us.

The dawn had flushed into a wilderness of rose as we left the bridge by the stream. Long shafts of light, plumed with pale gold, were flung up out of the east: everywhere was the tremulous awakening of the new day. A score of yards from the highway a cottage stood, sparrows stirring in the thatch, swift fairy-spiders running across the rude white-washed walls, a redbreast singing in the dew-drenched fuchsia-bush. The blue peat-smoke which rose

above it was so faint as to be invisible beyond the rowan which stood sunways. The westward part of the cottage was a byre : we could hear the lowing of a cow, the clucking of fowls.

In every glen, on each hillside, are crofts such as this. There was nothing unusual in what we saw, save that a collie crouched whimpering beyond a dyke on the farther side of the rowan.

"All is not well here," said the Will.

"No," murmured the Soul, "I see the shadowy footsteps of those who serve the Evil One. Await me here."

With that the Soul walked swiftly towards the cottage, and looked in at the little window. His thought was straightway ours, and we knew that a woman lay within and was about to give birth to a child. We knew, also, that those who had dark, cruel eyes, and wore each the feather of a hawk, had no power within, but were baffled, and roamed restlessly outside the cottage on the side of shadow. The *Fuath* himself was not there, but when his call came the evil spirits rose like a flock of crows and passed away. Then we saw our comrade stand back, and bow down, and fall upon his knees.

When he rejoined us we were for a moment

as one, and saw seven tall and beautiful spirits, starred and flame-crested, hand-clasped and standing circlewise round the cottage. They were Sons of Joy, who sang because in that mortal hour was born an immortal soul who in the white flame and the red of mortal life was to be a spirit of gladness and beauty. For there is no joy in the domain of the Spirit like that of the birth of a new joy.

A long while we walked in silence. In the eyes of the Soul we saw a divine and beautiful light: in the eyes of the Will we saw rainbow-spanned depths: in the eyes of the Body we saw gladness.

"We are one!"

None knew who spoke. For a moment I heard my own voice, saw my own shadow in the grass; then, in the twinkling of an eye, three stood, looking at each other with startled gaze.

"Let us go," said the Soul; "we have a long way yet to travel."

Each dreaming his own dream, we walked onward. Suddenly the Soul turned and looked in the eyes of the Body.

"You are thinking of your loneliness," he said gravely.

"Yes," answered the Body.

"And I too," said the Will.

For a time no word more was said.

"I am indeed alone." This I murmured to myself after a long while, and in a moment the old supreme wisdom sank, and we were not one but three.

"But you, O Soul," said the Will, "how can you be alone when in every hour you have the company of the invisible, and see the passage of powers and influence, of demons and angels, creatures of the triple universe, souls, and the pale flight of the unembodied?"

"I do not know loneliness because of what I see or do not see, but because of what I feel. When I walk here with you side by side it is as though I walked along a narrow shore between a fathomless sea and fathomless night."

The thought of one was the thought of three. I shivered with that great loneliness. The Body glanced sidelong at the Will, the Will at the Soul.

"It is not good to dwell upon that loneliness," said the last.

"To you, O Body, and to you, O Will, as to me, it is the signal of Him whom we have lost. Listen, and in the deepest hollow of loneliness we can hear the voice of the Shepherd."

"I hear nothing," said the Body.

"I hear an echo," said the Will: "I hear an echo; but so, too, I can hear the authentic voice of the sea in a hollow shell. Authentic! . . . when I know well that the murmur is no eternal voice, no whisper of the wave made one with pearly silence, but only the sound of my flowing blood heard idly in the curves of ear and shell?"

"Ah!" . . . cried the Body, "it is a lie, that cruel word of science. The shell must ever murmur of the sea; if not, at least let us dream that it does. Soon, soon we shall have no dream left. How am I to know that *all*, that everything, is not but an idle noise in my ears? How am I to know that the Hope of the Will, and the Voice of the Soul, and the message of the Word, and the Whisper of the Eternal Spirit, are not one and all but a mocking echo in that shell which for me is the Shell of Life, but may be only the cold inhabitation of my dreams?"

"Yet were it not for these echoes," the Soul answered, "life would be intolerable for you, as for you too, my friend."

The Will smiled scornfully.

"Dreams are no comfort, no solace, no relief from weariness even, if one knows them to be no more than the spray above the froth of a distempered mind."

Suddenly one of us began in a low voice a melancholy little song :—

I hear the sea-song of the blood in my heart,
I hear the sea-song of the blood in my ears ;
And I am far apart,
And lost in the years.

But when I lie and dream of that which was
Before the first man's shadow flitted on the grass—
I am stricken dumb
With sense of that to come.

Is then this wildering sea-song but a part
Of the old song of the mystery of the years—
Or only the echo of the tired Heart
And of Tears ?

But none answered, and so again we walked onward, silent. The wind had fallen, and in the noon-heat we began to grow weary. It was with relief that we saw the gleam of water between the branches of a little wood of birches, which waded towards it through a tide of bracken. Beyond the birks shimmered a rainbow ; a stray cloud had trailed from glen to glen, and suddenly broken among the tree-tops.

"There goes Yesterday!" cried the Body laughingly—alluding to the saying that the morning rainbow is the ghost of the day that

passed at dawn. The next moment he broke into a fragment of song :—

> Brother and Sister, wanderers they
> Out of the Golden Yesterday—
> Thro' the dusty Now and the dim To-morrow
> Hand-in-hand go Joy and Sorrow.

"Yes, joy and sorrow, O glad Body," exclaimed the Will—"but it is the joy only that is vain as the rainbow, which has no other message. It should be called the Bow of Sorrow."

"Not so," said the Soul gently, "or, if so, not as you mean, dear friend :—

> It is not Love that gives the clearest sight :
> For out of bitter tears, and tears unshed,
> Riseth the Rainbow of Sorrow overhead,
> And 'neath the Rainbow is the clearest light.

The Will smiled :—
"I too must have my say, dear poets :—

> Where rainbows rise through sunset rains
> By shores forlorn of isles forgot,
> A solitary Voice complains
> 'The World is here, the World is not.'
>
> The Voice may be the wind, or sea,
> Or spirit of the sundown West :
> Or, mayhap, some sweet air set free
> From off the Islands of the Blest :

It may be ; but I turn my face
To that which still I hold so dear ;
And lo, the voices of the days—
'The World is not, the World is here.'

'Tis the same end whichever way
And either way is soon forgot :
The World is all in all, To-day :
'To-morrow all the World is not.'

## VII

In the noon-heat we lay, for rest and coolness, by the pool, and on the shadow-side of a hazel. The water was of so dark a brown that we knew it was of a great depth, and, indeed, even at the far verge, a heron, standing motionless, wetted her breast-feathers.

In the mid-pool, where the brown lawns sloped into depths of purple-blue, we could see a single cloud, invisible otherwise where we lay. Nearer us, the water mirrored a mountain-ash heavy with ruddy clusters. That long, feathery foliage, that reddening fruit, hung in a strange, unfamiliar air ; the stranger, that amid the silence of those phantom branches ever and again flitted furtive shadow-birds.

We had walked for hours, and were now

glad to rest. With us we had brought oaten bread and milk, and were well content.

"It was by a pool such as this," said one of us, after a long interval, "that dreamers of old called to Connla, and Connla heard. That was the mortal name of one whose name we know not."

"Call him now," whispered the Body eagerly.

The Soul leaned forward, and stared into the fathomless brown dusk.

"Speak, Connla! Who art thou?"

Clear as a Sabbath-bell across windless pastures we heard a voice:

"I am of those who wait yet a while. I am older than all age, for my youth is Wisdom; and I am younger than all youth, for I am named To-morrow."

We heard no more. In vain, together, separately, we sought to break that silence which divides the mortal moment from hourless time. The Soul himself could not hear, or see, or even remember, because of that mortal raiment of the flesh which for a time he had voluntarily taken upon himself.

"I will tell you a dream that is not all a dream," he said at last, after we had lain a long while pondering what that voice had

uttered, that voice which showed that the grave held a deeper mystery than silence.

The Will looked curiously at him.

"Is it a dream wherein we have shared?" he asked slowly.

"That I know not: yet it may well be so. I call my dream 'The Sons of Joy.' If you or the Body have also dreamed, let each relate the dream."

"Yes," said the Body, "I have dreamed it. But I would call it rather 'The Sons of Delight.'"

"And I," said the Will, "The Sons of Silence."

"Tell it," said the Soul, looking towards the Body.

"It was night," answered the Body at once: "and I was alone in a waste place. My feet were entangled among briars and thorns, and beside me was a quagmire. On the briar grew a great staff, and beside it a circlet of woven thorn. I could see them, in a soft, white light. It must have been moonlight, for on the other side of the briar I saw, in the moonshine, a maze of wild roses. They were lovely and fragrant. I would have liked to take the staff, but it was circled with the thorn-wreath; so I turned to the moonshine and the wild roses. It was then that I saw a

multitude of tall and lovely figures, men and women, all rose-crowned, and the pale, beautiful faces of the women with lips like rose-leaves. They were singing. It was the Song of Delight. I, too, sang. And as I sang, I wondered, for I thought that the eyes of those about me were heavy with love and dreams, as though each had been pierced with a shadowy thorn. But still the song rose, and I knew that the flowers in the grass breathed to it, and that the vast slow cadence of the stars was its majestic measure. Then the dawn broke, and I saw all the company, winged and crested with the seven colours, press together, so that a rainbow was upbuilded. In the middle space below the rainbow, a bird sang. Then I knew I was that bird ; and as the rainbow vanished, and the dawn grew grey and chill, I sank to the ground. But it was all bog and swamp. I knew I should sing no more. But I heard voices saying : "O happy, wonderful bird, who has seen all delight, whose song was so rapt, sing, sing, sing!" But when I could sing no more I was stoned, and lay dead.

"That was my dream."

The Soul sighed.

"It was not thus I dreamed," he murmured ; "but thus :—

"I stood, at night, on the verge of the sea, and looked at the maze of stars. And while looking and dreaming, I heard voices, and, turning, beheld a multitude of human beings. All were sorrowful; many were heavy with weariness and despair; all suffered from some grievous ill. Among them were many who cried continually that they had no thought, or dream, no wish, but to forget all, and be at rest:

"I called to them, asking whither they were bound?

"'We are journeying to the Grave,' came the sighing answer.

"Then suddenly I saw the Grave. An angel stood at the portals. He was so beautiful that the radiance of the light upon his brow lit that shoreless multitude; in every heart a little flame arose. The name of that divine one was Hope.

"As shadow by shadow slipt silently into the dark road behind the Grave, I saw the Angel touch for a moment every pale brow.

"I knew at last that I saw beyond the Grave. Infinite ways traversed the universe, wherein suns and moons and stars hung like fruit. Multitude within multitude was there.

"Then, again, suddenly I stood where I

had been, and saw the Grave reopen, and from it troop back a myriad of bright and beautiful beings. I could see that some were souls re-born, some were lovely thoughts, dreams, hopes, aspirations, influences, powers and mighty spirits too. And all sang :

"'We are the Sons of Joy.'

"That was my dream."

We were still for a few moments. Then the Will spoke.

"This dream of ours is one thing as the Body's, and another as the Soul's. It is yet another, as I remember it :—

"On a night of a cold silence, when the breath of the equinox sprayed the stars into a continuous dazzle, I heard the honk of the wild geese as they cleft their way wedgewise through the gulfs overhead.

"In the twinkling of an eye I was beyond the last shadow of the last wing.

"Before me lay a land solemn with auroral light. For a thousand years, that were as a moment, I wandered therein. Then, far before me, I saw an immense semi-circle of divine figures, tall, wonderful, clothed with moonfire, each with uplifted head, as a forest before a wind. To the right they held the East, and to the left the West.

"'Who are you?' I cried, as I drifted through them like a mist of pale smoke.

"'We are the Laughing Gods,' they answered.

"Then after I had drifted on beyond the reach of sea or land, to a frozen solitude of ice, I saw again a vast concourse stretching crescent-wise from east to west: taller, more wonderful, crowned with stars, and standing upon dead moons white with perished time.

"'Who are you?' I cried, as I went past them like a drift of pale smoke.

"'We are the Gods who laugh not,' they answered.

"Then when I had drifted beyond the silence of the Pole, and there was nothing but unhabitable air, and the dancing fires were a flicker in the pale sheen far behind, I saw again a vast concourse stretching crescent-wise from east to west. They were taller still; they were more wonderful still. They were crowned with flaming suns, and their feet were white with the dust of ancient constellations.

"'Who are you!' I cried, as I went past them like a mist of pale smoke.

"We are the Gods,' they answered.

"And while I waned into nothingness I felt

in my nostrils the salt smell of the sea, and, listening, I heard the honk of the wild geese wedging southward.

"That was my dream."

When the Will ceased, nothing was said. We were too deeply moved by strange thoughts, one and all. Was it always to be thus . . . that we might dream one dream, confusedly real, confusedly unreal, when we three were one ; but that when each dreamed alone, the dream, the vision, was ever to be distinct in form and significance ?

We lay resting for long. After a time we slept. I cannot remember what then we dreamed, but I know that these three dreams were become one, and that what the Soul saw and what the Will saw and what the Body saw was a more near and searching revelation in this new and one dream than in any of the three separately. I pondered this, trying to remember : but the deepest dreams are always unrememberable, and leave only a fragrance, a sound as of a quiet footfall passing into silence, or a cry, or a sense of something wonderful, unimagined, or of light intolerable : but I could recall only the memory of a moment . . . a moment wherein, in a flash of lightning, I had seen all, understood all.

I rose . . . there was a dazzle on the water,

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a shimmer on every leaf, a falling away as of walls of air into the great river of the wind . . . and there were three, not one, each staring dazed at the other, in the ears of each the bewilderment of the already faint echo of that lost "I."

## VIII

Towards sundown we came upon a hamlet, set among the hills. Our hearts had beat quicker as we drew near, for with the glory of light gathered above the west the mountains had taken upon them a bloom soft and wonderful, and we thought that at last we were upon the gates of the hills towards which we had journeyed so eagerly. But when we reached the last pines on the ridge we saw the wild doves flying far westward. Beyond us, under a pale star, dimly visible in a waste of rose, were the Hills of Dream.

The Soul wished to go to them at once, for now they seemed so near to us that we might well reach them with the rising of the moon. But the others were tired, nor did the Hills seem so near to them. So we sat down by the peat-fire in a shepherd's cottage, and ate of milk and porridge, and talked with the man about the ways of that district, and the

hills, and how best to reach them. "If you want work," he said, "you should go away south, where the towns are, an' not to these lonely hills. They are so barren, that even the goatherds no longer wander their beasts there."

"It's said they're haunted," added the Body, seeing that the others did not speak.

"Ay, sure enough. That's well known, master. An' for the matter o' that, there's a wood down there to the right where for three nights past I have seen figures and the gleaming of fire. But there isn't a soul in that wood—no, not a wandering tinker. I took my dogs through it to-day, an' there wasn't the sign even of a last-year's gypsy. As for the low bare hill beyond it, not a man, let alone a woman or child, would go near it in the dark. In the Gaelic it's called Maol Dè, that is to say, the Hill of God."

For a long time we sat talking with the shepherd, for he told us of many things that were strange, and some that were beautiful, and some that were wild and terrible. One of his own brothers, after an evil life, had become mad, and even now lived in caves among the higher hills, going ever on hands and feet, and cursing by day and night because he was made as one of the wild swine, that know

only hunger and rage and savage sleep. He himself tended lovingly his old father, who was too frail to work, and often could not sleep at nights because of the pleasant but wearying noise the fairies made as they met on the dancing-lawns among the bracken. Our friend had not himself heard the simple people, and in a whisper confided to us that he thought the old man was a bit mazed, and that what he heard was only the solitary playing of the Amadan-Dhu, who, it was known to all, roamed the shadows between the two dusks. "Keep away from the river in the hollow," he said at another moment, "for it's there, on a night like this, just before the full moon got up, that, when I was a boy, I saw the Aonaran. An' to this day, if I saw you or any one standing by the water, it 'ud be all I could do not to thrust you into it and drown you : ay, I'd have to throw myself on my face, an' bite the grass, an' pray till my soul shook the murder out at my throat. For that's the Aonaran's doing."

Later, he showed us, when we noticed it, a bit of smooth coral that hung by a coarse leathern thong from his neck.

"Is that an amulet?" one of us asked.

"No : it's my lassie's."

We looked at the man inquiringly.

"The bairn's dead thirty years agone."

In the silence that followed, one of us rose, and went with the shepherd into the little room behind. When the man came back it was with a wonderful light in his face. Our comrade did not return . . . but when we glanced sidelong, lo, the Soul was there, as though he had not moved. Then, of a sudden, we knew what he had done, what he had said, and were glad.

When we left (the shepherd wanted us to stay the night, but we would not), the stars had come. The night was full of solemn beauty.

We went down by the wood of which the shepherd had spoken, and came upon it as the moon rose. But as a path bordered it, we followed that little winding white gleam, somewhat impatient now to reach those far hills where each of us believed he would find his heart's desire, or, at the least, have that vision of absolute Truth, of absolute Beauty, which we had set out to find.

We had not gone a third of the way when the Body abruptly turned, waving to us a warning hand. When we stood together silent, motionless, we saw that we were upon a secret garden. We were among ilex, and beyond were tall cypresses, like dark flames

rising out of the earth, their hither sides lit with wavering moonfire. Far away the hill-foxes barked. Somewhere near us in the dusk an owl hooted. The nested wild doves were silent. Once, the faint churr of a distant fern-owl sent a vibrant dissonance, that was yet strangely soothing, through the darkness and the silence.

"Look!" whispered the Body.

We saw, on a mossy slope under seven great cypresses, a man lying on the ground, asleep. The moonshine reached him as we looked, and revealed a face of so much beauty and of so great a sorrow that the heart ached. Nevertheless, there was so infinite a peace there, that, merely gazing upon it, our lives stood still. The moonbeam slowly passed from that divine face. I felt my breath rising and falling, like a feather before the mystery of the wind is come. Then, the further surprised, we saw that the sleeper was not alone. About him were eleven others, who also slept; but of these one sat upright, as though the watchman of the dark hour, slumbering at his post.

While the Body stooped, whispering, we caught sight of the white face of yet another, behind the great bole of a tree. This man, the twelfth of that company which was

gathered about the sleeper in its midst, stared, with uplifted hand. In his other hand, and lowered to the ground, was a torch. He stared upon the Sleeper.

Slowly I moved forward. But whether in so doing, or by so doing, we broke some subtle spell, which had again made us as one, I know not. Suddenly three stood in that solitary place, with none beside us, neither sleeping nor watching, neither quick nor dead. Far off the hill-foxes barked. Among the cypress boughs an owl hooted, and was still.

"Have we dreamed?" each asked the other. Then the Body told what he had seen, and what heard; and it was much as is written here, only that the sleepers seemed to him worn and poor men, ill-clad, weary, and that behind the white face of the twelfth, who hid behind a tree, was a company of evil men with savage faces, and fierce eyes, and drawn swords.

"I have seen nothing of all this," said the Will harshly, "but only a fire drowning in its own ashes, round which a maze of leaves circled this way and that, blown by idle winds."

The Soul looked at the speaker He sighed. "Though God were to sow living fires about

you, O Will," he said, "you would not believe."

The Will answered dully: "I have but one dream, one hope, and that is to believe. Do not mock me." The Soul leaned and kissed him lovingly on the brow.

"Look," he said; "what I saw was this: I beheld, asleep, the Divine Love; not sleeping as mortals sleep, but in a holy quiet, brooding upon infinite peace, and in commune with the Eternal Joy. Around him were the Nine Angels, the *Crois nan Aingeal* of our prayers, and two Seraphs—the Eleven Powers and Dominions of the World. And One stared upon them, and upon Him, out of the dark wood, with a face white with despair, that great and terrible Lord of Shadow whom some call Death, and some Evil, and some Fear, and some the Unknown God. Behind him was a throng of demons and demoniac creatures: and all died continually. And the wood itself—it was an infinite forest; a forest of human souls awaiting God."

The Will listened, with eyes strangely ashine. Suddenly he fell upon his knees, and prayed. We saw tears falling from his eyes.

"I am blind and deaf," he whispered in the

ear of the Body, as he rose; "but, lest I forget, tell me where I am, in what place we are."

"It is a garden called Gethsemane," answered the other—though I know not how he knew—I—we—as we walked onward in silence through the dusk of moon and star, and saw the gossamer-webs whiten as they became myriad, and hang heavy with the pale glister of the dews of dawn.

## IX

The morning twilight wavered, and it was as though an incalculable host of grey doves fled upward and spread earthward before a wind with pinions of rose: then the dappled dove-grey vapour faded, and the rose hung like the reflection of crimson fire, and dark isles of ruby and straits of amethyst and pale gold and saffron and April-green came into being: and the new day was come.

We stood silent. There is a beauty too great. We moved slowly round by the low bare hill beyond the wood. No one was there, but on the summit stood three crosses; one, midway, so great that it threw a shadow

from the brow of the East to the feet of the West.

The Soul stopped. He seemed as one rapt. We looked upon him with awe, for his face shone as though from a light within. "Listen," he whispered, "I hear the singing of the Sons of Joy. Farewell: I shall come again."

We were alone, we two. Silently we walked onward. The sunrays slid through the grass, birds sang, the young world that is so old smiled: but we had no heed for this. In that new solitude each almost hated the other. At noon a new grief, a new terror, came to us. We were upon a ridge, looking westward. There were no hills anywhere.

Doubtless the Soul had gone that way which led to them. For us . . . they were no longer there.

"Let us turn and go home," said the Body wearily.

The Will stood and thought.

"Let us go home," he said.

With that he turned, and walked hour after hour. It was by a road unknown to us, for, not noting where we went, we had traversed a path that led us wide of that by which we had come. At least we saw nothing of it. Nor, at dusk, would the Will go

further, nor agree even to seek for a path that might lead to the garden called Gethsemane.

"We are far from it," he said, "if indeed there be any such place. It was a dream, and I am weary of all dreams. When we are home again, O Body, we will dream no more."

The Body was silent, then abruptly laughed. His comrade looked at him curiously.

"Why do you laugh?"

"Did you not say there would be no more tears? And of that I am glad."

"You did not laugh gladly. But what I said was that there shall be no more dreams for us, that we will dream no more."

"It is the same thing. We have tears because we dream. If we hope no more, we dream no more: if we dream no more, we weep no more. And I laughed because of this: that if we weep no more we can live as we like, without thought of an impossible to-morrow, and with little thought even for to-day."

For a time we walked in brooding thought, but slowly, because of the gathering dark. Neither spoke, until the Body suddenly stood still, throwing up his arms.

"Oh, what a fool I have been! What a fool I have been!"

The Will made no reply. He stared before him into the darkness.

We had meant to rest in the haven of the great oaks, but a thin rain had begun, and we shivered with the chill. The thought came to us to turn and find our way back to the house of the shepherd, hopeless as the quest might prove, for we were more and more bewildered as to where we were, or even as to the direction in which we moved, being without pilot of moon or star, and having already followed devious ways. But while we were hesitating, we saw a light. The red flame shone steadily through the rainy gloom, so we knew that it was no lantern borne by a fellow-wayfarer. In a brief while we came upon it, and saw that it was from a red lamp burning midway in a forest chapel.

We lifted the latch and entered. There was no one visible. Nor was any one in the sacristy. We went to the door again, and looked vainly in all directions for light which might reveal a neighbouring village, or hamlet, or even a woodlander's cottage.

Glad as we were of the shelter, and of the glow from the lamp, a thought, a dream, a desire, divided us. We looked at each other

sidelong, each both seeking and avoiding the other's eyes.

"I cannot stay here," said the Body at last; "the place stifles me. I am frightened to stay. The path outside is clear and well trodden; it must lead somewhere, and as this chapel is here, and as the lamp is lit, a village, or at least a house, cannot be far off."

The Will looked at him.

"Do not go," he said earnestly.

"Why?"

"I do not know. But do not let us part. I dare not leave here. I feel as though this were our one safe haven to-night."

The Body moved to the door and opened it.

"I am going. And—and—I am going, too, because I am tired both of you and the Soul. There is only one way for me, I see, and I go that way. Farewell."

The door closed. The Will was alone. For a few moments he stood, smiling scornfully. With a sudden despairing gesture he ran to the door, flung it open, and peered into the darkness.

He could see no one; could hear no steps. His long beseeching cry was drowned among these solitudes. Slowly he re-closed the door; slowly walked across the stone flags; and with folded arms stood looking upon the

altar, dyed crimson with the glow from the great lamp which hung midway in the nave.

There was a choir-stall to the right. Here he sat, for a time glad merely to be at rest.

Soon all desire of sleep went from him, and he began to dream. At this he smiled : it was so brief a while ago since he had said he would dream no more.

Away now from his two lifelong comrades, and yet subtly connected with them, and living by and through each, he felt a new loneliness. Life could be very terrible. Life . . . the word startled him. What life could there be for him if the Body perished? That was why he had cried out in anguish after his comrade had left, with that ominous word "farewell." True, now he lived, breathed, thought, as before : but this, he knew, was by some inexplicable miracle of personality, by which the three who had been one were each enabled to go forth, fulfilling, and in all ways ruled and abiding by, the natural law. If the Body should die, would he not then become as a breath in frost? If the Soul . . . ah! he wondered what then would happen.

"When I was with the Body," he muttered, "I was weary of dreams, or longed only for those dreams which could be fulfilled in action. But now . . . now it is

different. I am alone. I must follow my own law. But what . . . how . . . where . . . am I to choose? All the world is a wilderness with a heart of living light. The side we see is Life: the side we do not see we call Hope. All ways—a thousand myriad ways—lead to it. Which shall I choose? How shall I go?"

Then I began to dream . . . I . . . we . . . then the Will began to dream.

Slowly the Forest Chapel filled with a vast throng, ever growing more dense as it became more multitudinous, till it seemed as though the walls fell away and that the aisles reached interminably into the world of shadow, through the present into the past, and to dim ages.

Behind the altar stood a living Spirit, most wonderful, clothed with Beauty and Terror.

Then the Will saw, understood, that this was not the Christ, nor yet the Holy Spirit, but a Dominion. It was the Spirit of this world, one of the Powers and Dominions whom of old men called the gods. But all in that incalculable throng worshipped this Spirit as the Supreme God. He saw, too, or realised, that, to those who worshipped, this Spirit appeared differently, now as a calm

and august dreamer, now as an inspired warrior, now as a man wearing a crown of thorns against the shadow of a gigantic cross : as the Son of God, or the Prophet of God, or in manifold ways the Supreme One, from Jehovah to the savage Fetich.

Turning from that ocean of drowned life, he looked again at the rainbow-plumed and opal-hued Spirit : but now he could see no one, nothing, but a faint smoke that rose as from a torch held by an invisible hand. The altar stood unserved.

Nor was the multitude present. The myriad had become a wavering shadow, and was no more.

A child had entered the church. The little boy came slowly along the nave till he stood beneath the red lamp, so that his white robe was warm with its glow. He sang, and the Will thought it was a strange song to hear in that place, and wondered if the child were not an image of what was in his own heart.

When the day darkens,
When dusk grows light,
When the dew is falling,
  When Silence dreams . . .
I hear a wind
Calling, calling
By day and by night.

What is the wind
That I hear calling
By day and by night,
  The crying of wind?
When the day darkens,
When dusk grows light,
When the dew is falling?

The Will rose and moved towards the child. No one was there, but he saw that a wind-eddy blew about the altar, for a little cloud of rose-leaves swirled above it. As in a dream he heard a voice, faint and sweet :—

Out of the Palace
Of Silence and Dreams
My voice is falling
  From height to height:
I am the Wind
Calling, calling
By day and by night.

The red flame waned and was no more. Above the altar a white flame, pure as an opal burning in moonfire, rose for a moment, and in a moment was mysteriously gathered into the darkness.

Startled, the Will stood moveless in the obscurity. Were these symbols of the end—the red flame and the white . . . the Body and the Soul?

Then he remembered the ancient wisdom

of the Gael, and went out of the Forest Chapel and passed into the woods. He put his lips to the earth, and lifted a green leaf to his brow, and held a branch to his ear: and because he was no longer heavy with the sweet clay of mortality, though yet of the human clan, he heard that which we do not hear, and saw that which we do not see, and knew that which we do not know. All the green life was his. In that new world he saw the lives of trees, now pale green, now of woodsmoke blue, now of amethyst: the grey lives of stone: breaths of the grass and reed: creatures of the air, delicate and wild as fawns, or swift and fierce and terrible, tigers of that undiscovered wilderness, with birds almost invisible but for their luminous wings, their opalescent crests.

With these and the familiar natural life, with every bird and beast kindred and knowing him kin, he lived till the dawn, and from the dawn till sunrise, and from sunrise till noon. At noon he slept. When he woke he saw that he had wandered far, and was glad when he came to a woodlander's cottage. Here a woman gave him milk and bread, but she was dumb, and he could learn nothing from her. She showed him a way which he followed; and by that high upland path, be-

fore sundown, he came again upon the Forest Chapel, and saw that it stood on a spur of blue hills.

Were it not for a great and startling weakness that had suddenly come upon him, he would have gone in search of his lost comrade. While he lay with his back against a tree, vaguely wondering what ill had come upon him, he heard a sound of wheels. Soon after a rough cart was driven rapidly towards the Forest Chapel, but when the countryman saw him he reined in abruptly, as though at once recognising one whom he had set out to seek. "Your friend is dying," he said; "come at once if you want to see him again. He sent me to look for you."

In a moment all lassitude and pain went from the Will, and he sprang into the cart, asking (while his mind throbbed with a dreadful anxiety) many questions. But all he could learn from his taciturn companion was that yester eve his comrade had fallen in with a company of roystering and loose folk, with whom he had drunk heavily overnight and gamed and lived evilly; that all this day he had lain as in a stupor, till the afternoon, when he awoke and straightway fell into a quarrel about a woman, and, after fierce words and blows, had been mortally

wounded with a knife. He was now lying, almost in the grasp of death, at the Inn of the Crossways.

In the whirl of anxiety, dread, and a new and terrible confusion, the Will could not think clearly as to what he was to say or do, what was to be or could be done for his friend. And while he was still swayed helplessly, this way and that, as a herring in a net drifted to and fro by wind and wave, the Inn was reached.

With stumbling eagerness he mounted the rough stairs, and entered a small room, clean, though almost sordid in its bareness, yet through its western window filled with the solemn light of sunset.

On a white bed lay the Body, and the Will saw at a glance that his comrade had not long to live. The handkerchief the sufferer held on his breast was stained with the bright crimson of the riven lungs; his white face was whiter than the pillow, the more so, as a red splatch lay on each cheek.

The dying man opened his eyes as the door opened. He smiled gladly when he saw who had come.

"I am glad indeed of this," he whispered. "I feared I was to die alone, and in delirium

or unconsciousness. Now I shall not be alone till the end. And then——"

But here the Will sank upon his kness by the bedside. For a few minutes his tears fell upon the hand he clasped. The sobs shook in his throat. He had never fully realised what love he bore his comrade, his second self; how interwrought with him were all his joys and sorrows, his interests, his hopes and fears.

Suddenly, with supplicating arms, he cried, "Do not die! Oh, do not die! Save me, save me, save me!"

"How can I save you, how can I help you, dear friend?" asked the Body in a broken voice; "my sand is all but run out; my hour is come."

"But do you not know, do you not see, that I cannot live without you!—that I must *die*—that if you perish so must I also pass with your passing breath!"

"No—no—no!—for, see, we are no longer one, but three. The Soul is far from us now, and soon you too will be gone on your own way. It is only I who can go no more into the beautiful dear world. O Will, if I could, I would give all your knowledge and endless quest of wisdom and all your hopes, and all the dreams and the white faith of the Soul,

for one little year of sweet human life—for one month even—ah, what do I say, for a few days even, for a day, for a few hours! It is so terrible thus to be stamped out. Yesterday I saw a dog leaping and barking in delight as it raced about a wagon, and then in a moment a foot caught and it was entangled, and the wagon-wheel crushed it into a lifeless mass. There was no dog; for that poor beast it was the same as though it had never been, as though the world had never been, as though nothing more was to be. He was a breath blown unremembering out of nothing into nothing. That is what death is. That is what death is, O Will!"

"No, no, it is too horrible—too cruel—too unjust."

"Yes, for you. But not for me. Your way is not the way of death, but of life. For me, I am as the beasts are, their sorry lord, but akin—oh yes, akin, akin. I follow the natural law in all things. And I know this now, dear comrade: that without you and the Soul I should have been no other than the brutes that know nothing save their innocent lusts and live and die without thought."

The Will slowly rose.

"It was madness for us to separate and

come upon this quest," he said, looking longingly at the Body.

"Not so, dear friend. We should have had to separate soon or late, whatsoever we had done. If I have feared you at times, and turned from you often, I have loved you well, and still more the Soul. I think you have both lied to me overmuch, and you mostly. But I forgive what I know was done in love and hope. And you, O Will, forgive me for all I have brought, what I now bring, upon you; forgive the many thwartings and dull indifference and heavy drag I have so often, oh, so often been to you. For now death is at hand. But I have one thing I wish to ask you."

"Speak."

"Before my life was broken, there was one whom I loved. Every hope, every dream, every joy, every sorrow that I had came from this love. It was her death which broke my life—not only for the piteous loss and all it meant to me, but because death came with tragic heedlessness—for she was young, and strong, and beautiful. And before she died, she said we should meet again. I was never, and now am far the less worthy of her; and yet—and yet—oh, if only that great, beautiful love were all I had to doubt or fear, I should

have no doubt or fear! But no—no—we shall never meet. How can we? Before to-morrow I shall be like that crushed dog, and not be: just as if I had never been!"

The blood rose, and sobs and tears made further words inaudible. But after a little the Body spoke again.

"But you, O Will, you and the Soul both resemble me. We are as flowers of the same colour, as clay of the same mould. It may be you shall meet her. Tell her that my last thought was of her; take her all my dreams and hopes—and say—and say—say——"

But here the Body sat up in the bed, ash-white, with parted lips and straining eyes.

"What? Quick, quick, dear Body—say?——"

"Say that I loved best that in her which I loved best in myself—the Soul. Tell her I have never wholly despaired. Ah, if only the Soul were here, I would not even now despair! Tell her I leave all to the Soul—and—and—love shall triumph——"

There was a rush of blood, a gurgling cry, and the Body sank back lifeless. In the very moment of death the eyes lightened with a wonderful radiance—it was as though the evening stars suddenly came through the dark.

The Will looked to see whence it came. The Soul stood beside him, white, wonderful, radiant.

"I have come," he said.

"For me?" said the Will, shaking as with an ague, yet in bitter irony.

"Yes, for you, and for the Body too."

"For the Body?—see, he is already clay. What word have you to say to *that*, to *me* who likewise am already perishing?

"This—do you remember what so brief a while ago we three as one wrote—wrote with my spirit, through your mind, and the Body's hand—these words: *Love is more great than we conceive, and Death is the keeper of unknown redemptions?*"

"Yes—yes—O Soul! I remember, I remember."

"It was true there: it is true here. Have I not ever told you that Love would save?"

With that the Soul moved over to the bedside, and kissed the Body.

"Farewell, fallen leaf. But the tree lives—and beyond the tree is the wind, the breath of the eternal."

"Look," he added, "our comrade is still asleep, though now no mortal skill could nourish the hidden spark"; and with that he stooped and kissed again the silent lips and

the still brow and the pulseless heart, and suddenly a breath, an essence, came from the body, in form like itself, a phantom, yet endued with a motion of life.

As the faintest murmur in a shell we heard him whisper, *Life! Life! Life!* Then, as a blown vapour, he was one with us. A singular change came upon the clay which had once been so near and dear to us : a frozen whiteness that had not been there before, a stillness as of ancient marble.

The Will stood, appalled, with wild eyes. Some dreadful invisible power was upon him.

"Lost!" he cried ; and now his voice, too, was faint as a murmur in a shell. But the Soul smiled.

Then the Will grew grey as a willow-leaf aslant in the wind ; and as the shadow of a reed wavered in the wind ; and as a reed's shadow is and is not, so was he suddenly no more.

But, in the miracle of a moment, the Soul appeared in the triple mystery of substance, and mind, and spirit. In full and joyous life the Will stood re-born, and now we three were one again.

I looked for the last time on that which had been our home. The lifeless thing lay, most terribly still and strange ; yet with a dignity

that came as a benediction, for this dead temple of life had yielded to a divine law, allied not to shadow and decay, but to the recurrent spring, to the eternal ebb and flow, to the infinite processional. It is we of the human clan only who are troubled by the vast waste and refuse of life. There is not any such waste, neither in the myriad spawn nor the myriad seed : a Spirit sows by the law we do not see, and reaps by a law we do not know.

Then I turned and went to the western window. I saw that the Inn stood upon the Hills of Dream, yet, when I looked within, I knew that I was again in my familiar home. Once more, beyond the fuchsia bushes, the sea sighed, as it felt the long shore with a continuous foamless wave. In the little room below, the lamp was lit ; for the glow fell warmly upon the gravel path, shell-bordered, and upon the tufted mignonette, sea-pinks, and feathery southernwood. The sound of hushed voices rose.

And now the dawn is come, and I have written this record of what we, who are now indeed one, but far more truly and intimately than before, went out to seek. In another hour I shall go hence, a wayfarer again. I have a long road to travel, but am sustained by joy, and uplifted by a great hope. When,

tired, I lay down the pen, and with it the last of mortal uses, it will be to face the glory of a new day. I have no fear. I shall not leave all I have loved, for I have that in me which binds me to this beautiful world, for another life at least, it may be for many lives. And that within me which dreamed and hoped shall now more gladly and wonderfully dream, and hope, and seek, and know, and see ever deeper and further into the mystery of beauty and truth. And that within me, which *knew*, now *knows*. In the deepest sense there is no spiritual dream that is not true, no hope that shall for ever go famished, no tears that shall not be gathered into the brooding skies of compassion, to fall again in healing dews.

What the Body could not, nor ever could see, and what to the Will was a darkness, or at best a bewildering mist, is now clear. There are mysteries of which I cannot write; not from any occult secret, but because they are so simple and inevitable, that, like the mystery of day and night, or the change of the seasons, or life and death, they must be learned by each, in his own way, in his own hour. It is not out of their light that I see; it is by these stars that I set forth, where else I should be as a shadow upon a trackless waste.

But Love, I am come to realise, is the supreme deflecting force. Love "unloosens sins," unites failure, disintegrates the act; not by an inconceivable conflict with the immutable law of consequence, but by deflection. For the divine love follows the life, and turns and meets it at last, and in that meeting deflects: so that that which is mortal, evil, and what is of the mortal law, the act, sinks; and on the forehead of the divine law that which is alone inevitable survives and moves onward in the rhythm that is life. When we understand the mystery of Redemption, we shall understand what Love is. The expiatory is an unknown attribute in the Divine. Expiation is but the earthly burnt-offering of that in us that is mortal: Redemption, which is the spiritual absorption of the expiation due to others, and the measureless restitution in love of wrong humbly brought to the soul and consumed there—so that it issues a living force to meet and deflect—is the living witness in that of us which is immortal. Those who wrong us do indeed become our saviours. It is *their* expiation that we make *ours:* they must go free of us; and when they come again and discrown us, then in love we shall be at one and equal. So far, words may clothe thought; but, beyond, the soul

knows there is no expiation. Except you redeem yourself, there is no God. Forgiveness is the dream of little children: beautiful because thus far we see and know, but no farther.

I see now what madness it was, as so often happened, to despise the body. But one mystery has become clear to me through this strange quest of ours—though when I say "I," or "our," I know not whether it is the Body or the Will or the Soul that speaks, till I remember that triune marriage at the deathbed, and know that while each is consciously each—the one with memory, the other with knowledge and hope, the third with wisdom and faith—we are yet one, as are the yellow and the white and the violet in the single flame in this candle beside me. And this mystery is, that the body was not built of life-warmed clay merely to be the house of the soul. Were it so, were the soul unwed to its mortal comrades, it would be no more than a moment's uplifted wave on an infinite sea. Without memory, without hope, it would be no more than a breath of the Spirit. But before the Divine Power moulded us into substance, we were shaped by it in form. And form is, in the spiritual law, what the crystal is in the chemic law.

For now I see clearly that the chief end of the body is to enable the soul to come into intimate union with the natural law, so that it may fulfil the divine law of Form, and be at one with all created life and yet be for ever itself and individual. By itself the soul would only vainly aspire ; it has to learn to remember, to become at one with the wind and the grass and with all that lives and moves ; to take its life from the root of the body, and its green life from the mind, and its flower and fragrance from what it may of itself obtain, not only from this world, but from its own dews, its own rainbows, dawn stars and evening stars, and vast incalculable fans of time and death. And this I have learned : that there is no absolute Truth, no absolute Beauty, even for the Soul. It may be that in the Divine Forges we shall be so moulded as to have perfect vision. Meanwhile only that Truth is deepest, that Beauty highest which is seen, not by the Soul only, or by the Mind, or by the Body, but all three as one. Let each be perfect in kind and perfect in unity. This is the signal meaning of the mystery. It is so inevitable that it has its blind descent to fetich as well as its divine ascension. But the ignoble use does not annul the noble purport, any more than

the blindness of many obscures the dream of one.

There could be no life hereafter for the soul were it not for the body, and what were that life without the mind, the child of both, whom the ancient seers knew and named Mnemosynê? Without memory life would be a void breath, immortality a vacuum.

Ah, the glory of the lifting light! The new day is come. Farewell.

# IONA

*"There are moments when the soul takes wings: what it has to remember, it remembers: what it loves, it loves still more: what it longs for, to that it flies."*

# Iona

A few places in the world are to be held holy, because of the love which consecrates them and the faith which enshrines them. Their names are themselves talismans of spiritual beauty. Of these is Iona.

The Arabs speak of Mecca as a holy place before the time of the prophet, saying that Adam himself lies buried here: and, before Adam, that the Sons of Allah, who are called Angels, worshipped; and that when Allah Himself stood upon perfected Earth it was on this spot. And here, they add, when there is no man left upon earth, an angel shall gather up the dust of this world, and say to Allah, "There is nothing left of the whole earth but Mecca: and now Mecca is but the few grains of sand that I hold in the hollow of my palm, O Allah."

In spiritual geography Iona is the Mecca of the Gael.

It is but a small isle, fashioned of a little sand, a few grasses salt with the spray of an

ever-restless wave, a few rocks that wade in heather and upon whose brows the sea-wind weaves the yellow lichen. But since the remotest days sacrosanct men have bowed here in worship. In this little island a lamp was lit whose flame lighed pagan Europe, from the Saxon in his fens to the swarthy folk who came by Greek waters to trade the Orient. Here Learning and Faith had their tranquil home, when the shadow of the sword lay upon all lands, from Syracuse by the Tyrrhene Sea to the rainy isles of Orcc. From age to age, lowly hearts have never ceased to bring their burthen here. Iona herself has given us for remembrance a fount of youth more wonderful than that which lies under her own boulders of Dûn-I. And here Hope waits.

To tell the story of Iona is to go back to God, and to end in God.

But to write of Iona, there are many ways of approach. No place that has a spiritual history can be revealed to those who know nothing of it by facts and descriptions. The approach may be through the obscure glens of another's mind and so out by the moonlit way, as well as by the track that thousands travel. I have nothing to say of Iona's acre-

age, or fisheries, or pastures: nothing of how the islanders live. These things are the accidental. There is small difference in simple life anywhere. Moreover, there are many to tell all that need be known.

There is one Iona, a little island of the west. There is another Iona, of which I would speak. I do not say that it lies open to all. It is as we come that we find. If we come, bringing nothing with us, we go away ill-content, having seen and heard nothing of what we had vaguely expected to see or hear. It is another Iona than the Iona of sacred memories and prophecies: Iona the metropolis of dreams. None can understand it who does not see it through its pagan light, its Christian light, its singular blending of paganism and romance and spiritual beauty. There is, too, an Iona that is more than Gaelic, that is more than a place rainbow-lit with the seven desires of the world, the Iona that, if we will it so, is a mirror of your heart and of mine.

History may be written in many ways, but I think that in days to come the method of spiritual history will be found more suggestive than the method of statistical history. The one will, in its own way, reveal inward life, and hidden significance, and palpable

destiny: as the other, in the good but narrow way of convention, does with exactitude delineate features, narrate facts, and relate events. The true interpreter will as little despise the one as he will claim all for the other.

And that is why I would speak here of Iona as befalls my pen, rather than as perhaps my pen should go: and choose legend and remembrance, and my own and other memories and associations, and knowledge of my own and others, and hidden meanings, and beauty and strangeness surviving in dreams and imaginations, rather than facts and figures, that others could adduce more deftly and with more will.

In the *Félire na Naomh Nerennach* is a strangely beautiful if fantastic legend of one Mochaoi, Abbot of n'-Aondruim in Uladh. With some companions he was at the edge of a wood, and while busy in cutting wattles wherewith to build a church, "he heard a bright bird singing on the blackthorn near him. It was more beautiful than the birds of the world." Mochaoi listened entranced. There was more in that voice than in the throat of any bird he had ever heard, so he stopped his wattle-cutting, and, looking at the

bird, courteously asked who was thus delighting him. The bird at once answered, "A man of the people of my Lord" (that is, an angel). "Hail," said Mochaoi, "and for why that, O bird that is an angel?" "I am come here by command to encourage you in your good work, but also, because of the love in your heart, to amuse you for a time with my sweet singing." "I am glad of that," said the saint. Thereupon the bird sang a single surpassing sweet air, and then fixed his beak in the feathers of his wing, and slept. But Mochaoi heard the beauty and sweetness and infinite range of that song for three hundred years. Three hundred years were in that angelic song, but to Mochaoi it was less than an hour. For three hundred years he remained listening, in the spell of beauty: nor in that enchanted hour did any age come upon him, or any withering upon the wattles he had gathered; nor in the wood itself did a single leaf turn to a red or yellow flame before his eyes. Where the spider spun her web, she spun no more: where the dove leaned her grey breast from the fir, she leaned still.

Then suddenly the bird took its beak from its wing-feathers, and said farewell. When it was gone, Mochaoi lifted his wattles, and

went homeward as one in a dream. He stared, when he looked for the little wattled cells of the Sons of Patrick. A great church built of stone stood before his wondering eyes. A man passed him, and told the stranger that it was the church of St. Mochaoi. When he spoke to the assembled brothers, none knew him : some thought he had been taken away by the people of the Shee, and come back at fairy-nightfall, which is the last hour of the last day of three hundred years. "Tell us your name and lineage," they cried. "I am Mochaoi, Abbot of n'-Aondruim," he said, and then he told his tale, and they knew him, and made him abbot again. In the enchanted wood a shrine was built, and about it a church grew, "and surpassingly white angels often alighted there, or sang hymns to it from the branches of the forest trees, or leaned with their foot on tiptoe, their eyes on the horizon, their ear on the ground, their wings flapping, their bodies trembling, waiting to send tidings of prayer and repentance with a beat of their wings to the King of the Everlasting."

There are many who thought that Mochaoi was dead, when he was seen no more of his fellow-monks at the forest monastery of n'Aondruim in Uladh. But his

chronicler knew: "a sleep without decay of the body Mochaoi of Antrim slept."

I am reminded of the story of Mochaoi when I think of Iona. I think she too, beautiful isle, while gathering the help of human longing and tears and hopes, strewn upon her beaches by wild waves of the world, stood, enchanted, to listen to a Song of Beauty. "That is a new voice I hear in the wave," we can dream of her saying, and of the answer: "we are the angelic flocks of the Shepherd: we are the Voices of the Eternal: listen a while!"

It has been a long sleep, that enchanted swoon. But Mochaoi awoke, after three hundred years, and there was neither time upon his head, nor age in his body, nor a single withered leaf of the forest at his feet. And shall not that be possible for the Isle of Dreams, whose sands are the dust of martyrs and noble and beautiful lives, which was granted to one man by "one of the people of my Lord?"

When I think of Iona I think often, too, of a prophecy once connected with Iona; though perhaps current no more in a day when prophetical hopes are fallen dumb and blind.

It is commonly said that, if he would be

heard, none should write in advance of his times. That I do not believe. Only, it does not matter how few listen. I believe that we are close upon a great and deep spiritual change. I believe a new redemption is even now conceived of the Divine Spirit in the human heart, that is itself as a woman, broken in dreams, and yet sustained in faith, patient, long-suffering, looking towards home. I believe that though the Reign of Peace may be yet a long way off, it is drawing near : and that Who shall save us anew shall come divinely as a Woman. to save as Christ saved, but not, as He did, to bring with Her a sword. But whether this Divine Woman, this Mary of so many passionate hopes and dreams, is to come through mortal birth, or as an immortal Breathing upon our souls, none can yet know.

Sometimes I dream of the old prophecy that Christ shall come again upon Iona, and of that later and obscure prophecy which foretells, now as the Bride of Christ, now as the Daughter of God, now as the Divine Spirit embodied through mortal birth in a Woman, as once through mortal birth in a Man, the coming of a new Presence and Power : and dream that this may be upon Iona, so that the little Gaelic island may

become as the little Syrian Bethlehem. But more wise it is to dream, not of hallowed ground, but of the hallowed gardens of the soul wherein She shall appear white and radiant. Or, that upon the hills, where we are wandered, the Shepherdess shall call us home.

From one man only, on Iona itself, I have heard any allusion to the prophecy as to the Saviour who shall yet come: and he in part was obscure, and confused the advent of Mary into the spiritual world with the possible coming again to earth of Mary, as another Redeemer, or with a descending of the Divine Womanhood upon the human heart as a universal spirit descending upon awaiting souls. But in intimate remembrance I recall the words and faith of one or two whom I loved well. Nor must I forget that my old nurse, Barabal, used to sing a strange "oran," to the effect that when St. Bride came again to Iona it would be to bind the hair and wash the feet of the Bride of Christ.

One of those to whom I allude was a young Hebridean priest, who died in Venice, after troubled years, whose bitterest vicissitude was the clouding of his soul's hope by the wings of a strange multitude of dreams—one

of whom and whose end I have elsewhere written: and he told me once how, "as our forefathers and elders believed and still believe, that Holy Spirit shall come again which once was mortally born among us as the Son of God, but, then, shall be the Daughter of God. The Divine Spirit shall come again as a Woman. Then for the first time the world will know peace." And when I asked him if it were not prophesied that the Woman is to be born in Iona, he said that if this prophecy had been made it was doubtless of an Iona that was symbolic, but that this was a matter of no moment, for She would rise suddenly in many hearts, and have her habitation among dreams and hopes. The other who spoke to me of this Woman who is to save was an old fisherman of a remote island of the Hebrides, and one to whom I owe more than to any other spiritual influence in my childhood, for it was he who opened to me the three gates of Beauty. Once this old man, Seumas Macleod, took me with him to a lonely haven in the rocks, and held me on his knee as we sat watching the sun sink and the moon climb out of the eastern wave. I saw no one, but abruptly he rose and put me from him, and bowed his grey head as he knelt before one who suddenly was standing in that place. I

asked eagerly who it was. He told me that it was an Angel. Later, I learned (I remember my disappointment that the beautiful vision was not winged with great white wings) that the Angel was one soft flame of pure white, and that below the soles of his feet were curling scarlet flames. He had come in answer to the old man's prayer. He had come to say that we could not see the Divine One whom we awaited. "But you will yet see that Holy Beauty," said the Angel, and Seumas believed, and I too believed, and believe. He took my hand, and I knelt beside him, and he bade me repeat the words he said. And that was how I first prayed to Her who shall yet be the Balm of the World.

And since then I have learned, and do see, that not only prophecies and hopes, and desires unclothed yet in word or thought, foretell her coming, but already a multitude of spirits are in the gardens of the soul, and are sowing seed and calling upon the wind of the south; and that everywhere are watching eyes and uplifted hands, and signs which cannot be mistaken, in many lands, in many peoples, in many minds; and, in the heaven itself that the soul sees, the surpassing signature.

I recall one whom I knew, a fisherman of the little green island: and I tell this story of Coll here, for it is to me more than the story of a dreaming islander. One night, lying upon the hillock that is called Cnoc-nan-Aingeal, because it is here that St. Colum was wont to hold converse with an angel out of heaven, he watched the moonlight move like a slow fin through the sea: and in his heart were desires as infinite as the waves of the sea, the moving homes of the dead.

And while he lay and dreamed, his thoughts idly adrift as a net in deep waters, he closed his eyes, muttering the Gaelic words of an old line,

*In the Isle of Dreams God shall yet fulfil Himself anew.*

Hearing a footfall, he stirred. A man stood beside him. He did not know the man, who was young, and had eyes dark as hill-tarns, with hair light and soft as thistledown; and moved light as a shadow, delicately treading the grass as the wind treads it. In his hair he had twined the fantastic leaf of the horn-poppy.

The islander did not move or speak: it was as though a spell were upon him.

"God be with you," he said at last, uttering the common salutation.

"And with you, Coll mac Coll," answered the stranger. Coll looked at him. Who was this man, with the sea-poppy in his hair, who, unknown, knew him by name? He had heard of one whom he did not wish to meet, the Green Harper: also of a grey man of the sea whom islesmen seldom alluded to by name: again, there was the Amadan Dhû . . . but at that name Coll made the sign of the cross, and remembering what Father Allan had told him in South Uist, muttered a holy exorcism of the Trinity.

The man smiled.

"You need have no fear, Coll mac Coll," he said quietly.

"You that know my name so well are welcome, but if you in turn would tell me your name I should be glad."

"I have no name that I can tell you," answered the stranger gravely; "but I am not of those who are unfriendly. And because you can see me and speak to me, I will help you to whatsoever you may wish."

Coll laughed.

"Neither you nor any man can do that. For now that I have neither father nor mother, nor brother nor sister, and my lass

too is dead, I wish neither for sheep nor cattle, nor for new nets and a fine boat, nor a big house, nor as much money as MacCailein Mòr has in the bank at Inveraora."

'What then do you wish for, Coll mac Coll?"

"I do not wish for what cannot be, or I would wish to see again the dear face of Morag, my lass. But I wish for all the glory and wonder and power there is in the world, and to have it all at my feet, and to know everything that the Holy Father himself knows, and have kings coming to me as the crofters come to MacCailein Mòr's factor."

"You can have that, Coll mac Coll," said the Green Harper, and he waved a withe of hazel he had in his hand.

"What is that for?" said Coll.

"It is to open a door that is in the air. And now, Coll, if that is your wish of all wishes, and you will give up all other wishes for that wish, you can have the sovereignty of the world. Ay, and more than that: you shall have the sun like a golden jewel in the hollow of your right hand, and all the stars as pearls in your left, and have the moon as a white shining opal above your brows, with all knowledge behind the sun, within the moon, and beyond the stars."

Coll's face shone. He stood, waiting. Just then he heard a familiar sound in the dusk. The tears came into his eyes.

"Give me instead," he cried, "give me a warm breast-feather from that grey dove of the woods that is winging home to her young." He looked as one moon-dazed. None stood beside him. He was alone. Was it a dream, he wondered? But a weight was lifted from his heart. Peace fell upon him as dew upon grey pastures. Slowly he walked homeward. Once, glancing back, he saw a white figure upon the knoll, with a face noble and beautiful. Was it Colum himself come again? he mused; or that white angel with whom the Saint was wont to discourse, and who brought him intimacies of God? or was it but the wave-fire of his dreaming mind, as lonely and cold and unreal as that which the wind of the south makes upon the wandering hearths of the sea?

I tell this story of Coll here, for, as I have said, it is to me more than the story of a dreaming islander. He stands for the soul of a race. It is because, to me, he stands for the sorrowful genius of our race, that I have spoken of him here. Below all the strife of lesser desires, below all that he has in common with other men, he has the livelong

unquenchable thirst for the things of the spirit. This is the thirst that makes him turn so often from the near securities and prosperities, and indeed all beside, setting his heart aflame with vain, because illimitable, desires. For him, the wisdom before which knowledge is a frosty breath : the beauty that is beyond what is beautiful. For, like Coll, the world itself has not enough to give him. And at the last, and above all, he is like Coll in this, that the sun and moon and stars themselves may become as trampled dust, for only a breast-feather of that Dove of the Eternal, which may have its birth in mortal love, but has its evening home where are the dews of immortality.

"The Dove of the Eternal." It was from the lips of an old priest of the Hebrides that I first heard these words. I was a child, and asked him if it was a white dove, such as I had seen fanning the sunglow in Icolmkill.

"Yes," he told me, "the Dove is white, and it was beloved of Colum, and is of you, little one, and of me."

"Then it is not dead?"

"It is not dead."

I was in a more wild and rocky isle than

Iona then, and when I went into a solitary place close by my home it was to a stony wilderness so desolate that in many moods I could not bear it. But that day, though there were no sheep lying beside boulders as grey and still, nor whinnying goats (creatures that have always seemed to me strangely homeless, so that, as a child, it was often my noon-fancy on hot days to play to them on a little reed-flute I was skilled in making, thwarting the hill-wind at the small holes to the fashioning of a rude furtive music, which I believed comforted the goats, though why I did not know, and probably did not try to know) : and though I could hear nothing but the soft, swift, slipping feet of the wind among the rocks and grass and a noise of the tide crawling up from a shore hidden behind crags (beloved of swallows for the small honey-flies which fed upon the thyme) : still, on that day, I was not ill at ease, nor in any way disquieted. But before me I saw a white rock-dove, and followed it gladly. It flew circling among the crags, and once I thought it had passed seaward ; but it came again, and alit on a boulder.

I went upon my knees, and prayed to it, and, as nearly as I can remember, in these words :—

"O Dove of the Eternal, I want to love you, and you to love me: and if you live on Iona, I want you to show me, when I go there again, the place where Colum the Holy talked with an angel. And I want to live as long as you, Dove" (I remember thinking this might seem disrespectful, and that I added hurriedly and apologetically), "Dove of the Eternal."

That evening I told Father Ivor what I had done. He did not laugh at me. He took me on his knee, and stroked my hair, and for a long time was so silent that I thought he was dreaming. He put me gently from him, and kneeled at the chair, and made this simple prayer which I have never forgotten: "O Dove of the Eternal, grant the little one's prayer."

That is a long while ago now, and I have sojourned since in Iona, and there and elsewhere known the wild doves of thought and dream. But I have not, though I have longed, seen again the White Dove that Colum so loved. For long I thought it must have left Iona and Barra too, when Father Ivor died.

Yet I have not forgotten that it is not dead. "I want to live as long as you," was my child's plea: and the words of the old priest,

knowing and believing were, "O Dove of the Eternal, grant the little one's prayer."

It was not in Barra, but in Iona, that, while yet a child, I set out one evening to find the Divine Forges. A Gaelic sermon, preached on the shoreside by an earnest man, who, going poor and homeless through the west, had tramped the long roads of Mull over against us, and there fed to flame a smouldering fire, had been my ministrant in these words. The "revivalist" had spoken of God as one who would hammer the evil out of the soul and weld it to good, as a blacksmith at his anvil: and suddenly, with a dramatic gesture, he cried: "This little island of Iona is this anvil; God is your blacksmith: but oh, poor people, who among you knows the narrow way to the Divine Forges?"

There is a spot on Iona that has always had a strange enchantment for me. Behind the ruined walls of the Columban church, the slopes rise, and the one isolated hill of Iona is, there, a steep and sudden wilderness. It is commonly called Dûn-I *(Doon-ee)*, for at the summit in old days was an island fortress; but the Gaelic name of the whole of this uplifted shoulder of the isle is Slibh Meanach. Hidden under a wave of heath

and boulder, near the broken rocks, is a little pool. From generation to generation this has been known, and frequented, as the Fountain of Youth.

There, through boggy pastures, where the huge-horned shaggy cattle stared at me, and up through the ling and roitch, I climbed: for, if anywhere, I thought that from there I might see the Divine Forges, or at least might discover a hidden way, because of the power of that water, touched on the eyelids at sunlift, at sunset, or at the rising of the moon.

From where I stood I could see the people still gathered upon the dunes by the shore, and the tall, ungainly figure of the preacher. In the narrow strait were two boats, one being rowed across to Fionnaphort, and the other, with a dun sail burning flame-brown, hanging like a bird's wing against Glas Eilean, on the tideway to the promontory of Earraid. Was the preacher still talking of the Divine Forges? I wondered; or were the men and women in the ferry hurrying across to the Ross of Mull to look for them among the inland hills? And the Earraid men in the fishing-smack: were they sailing to see if they lay hidden in the wilderness of rocks, where the muffled barking of the seals made the loneliness more wild and remote?

I wetted my eyelids, as I had so often done before (and not always vainly, though whether vision came from the water, or from a more quenchless spring within, I know not), and looked into the little pool. Alas! I could see nothing but the reflection of a star, too obscured by light as yet for me to see in the sky, and, for a moment, the shadow of a gull's wing as the bird flew by far overhead. I was too young then to be content with the symbols of coincidence, or I might have thought that the shadow of a wing from Heaven, and the light of a star out of the East, were enough indication. But, as it was, I turned, and walked idly northward, down the rough side of Dun Bhuirg (at Cul Bhuirg, a furlong westward, I had once seen a phantom, which I believed to be that of the Culdee, Oran, and so never went that way again after sundown) to a thyme-covered mound that had for me a most singular fascination.

It is a place to this day called Dûn Mananain. Here, a friend who told me many things, a Gaelic farmer named Macarthur, had related once a fantastic legend about a god of the sea. Manaun was his name, and he lived in the times when Iona was part of the kingdom of the Suderöer. Whenever he

willed he was like the sea, and that is not wonderful, for he was born of the sea. Thus his body was made of a green wave. His hair was of wrack and tangle, glistening with spray; his robe was of windy foam; his feet, of white sand. That is, when he was with his own, or when he willed; otherwise, he was as men are. He loved a woman of the south so beautiful that she was named Dèar-sadh-na-Ghréne (Sunshine). He captured her and brought her to Iona in September when it is the month of peace. For one month she was happy: when the wet gales from the west set in, she pined for her own land: yet in the dream-days of November, she smiled so often that Manaun hoped; but when Winter was come, her lover saw that she could not live. So he changed her into a seal. "You shall be a sleeping woman by day," he said, "and sleep in my dûn here on Iona: and by night, when the dews fall, you shall be a seal, and shall hear me calling to you from a wave, and shall come out and meet me."

They have mortal offspring also, it is said.

There is a story of a man who went to the mainland, but could not see to plough, because the brown fallows became waves that

splashed noisily about him. The same man went to Canada, and got work in a great warehouse ; but among the bales of merchandise he heard the singular note of the sandpiper, and every hour the sea-fowl confused him with their crying.

Probably some thought was in my mind that there, by Dûn Mananain, I might find a hidden way. That summer I had been thrilled to the inmost life by coming suddenly, by moonlight, on a seal moving across the last sand-dune between this place and the bay called Port Ban. A strange voice, too, I heard upon the sea. True, I saw no white arms upthrown, as the seal plunged into the long wave that swept the shore ; and it was a grey skua that wailed above me, winging inland ; yet had I not had a vision of the miracle ?

But alas ! that evening there was not even a barking seal. Some sheep fed upon the green slope of Manaun's mound.

So, still seeking a way to the Divine Forges, I skirted the shore and crossed the sandy plain of the Machar, and mounted the upland district known as Sliav Starr (the Hill of Noises), and walked to a place, to me sacred. This was a deserted green airidh

between great rocks. From here I could look across the extreme western part of Iona, to where it shelved precipitously around the little Port-na-Churaich, the Haven of the Coracle, the spot where St. Columba landed when he came to the island.

I knew every foot of ground here, as every cave along the wave-worn shore. How often I had wandered in these solitudes, to see the great spout of water rise through the grass from the caverns beneath, forced upward when tide and wind harried the sea-flocks from the north; or to look across the ocean to the cliffs of Antrim, from the Carn cul Ri Eirinn, the Cairn of the Hermit King of Ireland, about whom I had woven many a romance.

I was tired, and fell asleep. Perhaps the Druid of a neighbouring mound, or the lonely Irish King, or Colum himself (whose own Mound of the Outlook was near), or one of his angels who ministered to him, watched, and shepherded my dreams to the desired fold. At least I dreamed, and thus :—

The skies to the west beyond the seas were not built of flushed clouds, but of transparent flame. These flames rose in solemn stillness above a vast forge, whose anvil was the shining breast of the sea. Three great Spirits

stood by it, and one lifted a soul out of the deep shadow that was below; and one with his hands forged the soul of its dross and welded it anew; and the third breathed upon it, so that it was winged and beautiful. Suddenly the glory-cloud waned, and I saw the multitude of the stars. Each star was the gate of a long, shining road. Many—a countless number—travelled these roads. Far off I saw white walls, built of the pale gold and ivory of sunrise. There again I saw the three Spirits, standing and waiting. So these, I thought, were not the walls of Heaven, but the Divine Forges.

That was my dream. When I awaked, the curlews were crying under the stars.

When I reached the shadowy glebe, behind the manse by the sea, I saw the preacher walking there by himself, and doubtless praying. I told him I had seen the Divine Forges, and twice; and in crude, childish words told how I had seen them.

"It is not a dream," he said.

I know now what he meant.

It would seem to be difficult for most of us to believe that what has perished can be reborn. It is the same whether we look upon the dust of ancient cities, broken

peoples, nations that stand and wait, old faiths, defeated dreams. It is so hard to believe that what has fallen may arise. Yet we have perpetual symbols; the tree, that the winds of Autumn ravage and the Spring restores; the trodden weed, that in April awakes white and fragrant; the swallow, that in the south remembers the north. We forget the ebbing wave that from the sea-depths comes again: the Day, shod with sunrise while his head is crowned with stars.

Far-seeing was the vision of the old Gael, who prophesied that Iona would never wholly cease to be "the lamp of faith," but would in the end shine forth as gloriously as of yore, and that, after dark days, a new hope would go hence into the world. But before that (and he prophesied when the island was in its greatness)—

> "Man tig so gu crich
> Bithidh I mar a bha,
> Gun a ghuth mannaich
> Findh shalchar ba . . ."

quaint old-world Erse words, which mean—

> "Before this happens,
> Iona will be as it was,

Without the voice of a monk,
Under the dung of cows." [1]

And truly enough the little island was for long given over to the sea-wind, whose mournful chant even now fills the ruins where once the monks sang matins and evensong; for generations, sheep and long-horned shaggy kine found their silent pastures in the wilderness that of old was "this our little seabounded Garden of Eden."

But now that Iona has been "as it was," the other and greater change may yet be, may well have already come.

Strange, that to this day none knows with surety the derivation or original significance of the name Iona. Many ingenious guesses have been made, but of these some are obviously far-fetched, others are impossible in

[1] A more polished later version, though attributed to Columba, runs:—

"An I mo chridhe, I mo ghràidh
An àite guth mhanach bidh géum ba;
Ach mu'n tig an saoghal gu crich,
Bithidh I mar a bha."

(In effect: *In Iona that is my heart's desire, Iona that is my love, the lowing of cows shall yet replace the voices of monks: but before the end is come Iona shall again be as it was.)*

Gaelic, and all but impossible to the mind of any Gael speaking his ancient tongue. Nearly all these guesses concern the Iona of Columba : few attempt the name of the sacred island of the Druids. Another people once lived here with a forgotten faith ; possibly before the Picts there was yet another, who worshipped at strange altars and bowed down before Shadow and Fear, the earliest of the gods.

The most improbable derivation is one that finds much acceptance. When Columba and his few followers were sailing northward from the isle of Oronsay, in quest, it is said, of this sacred island of the Druids, suddenly one of the monks cried *sud i* ( *? siod e !* ) "yonder it!" With sudden exultation Columba exclaimed, *Mar sud bithe I, goir thear II*, "Be it so, and let it be called I" (I or EE). We are not the wiser for this obviously monkish invention. It accounts for a syllable only, and seems like an effort to explain the use of *I* (II, Y, Hy, Hee) for "island" in place of the vernacular Innis, Inch, Eilean, etc. Except in connection with Iona I doubt if *I* for island is ever now used in modern Gaelic. Icolmkill is familiar : the anglicised Gaelic of the Isle of Colum of the Church. But it is doubtful if any now living has ever

heard a Gael speak of an island as *I;* I doubt if an instance could be adduced. On the other hand, *I* might well have been, and doubtless is, used in written speech as a sign for Innis, as *'s* is the common writing of *agus*, and. As for the ancient word *Idh* or *Iy*, I do not know that its derivation has been ascertained, though certain Gaelic linguists claim that *Idh* and Innis are of the same root.

I do not know on what authority, but an anonymous Gaelic writer, in an account of Iona in 1771, alludes to the probability that Christianity was introduced there before St. Columba's advent, and that the island was already dedicated to the Apostle St. John, "for it was originally called *I'Eoin*, i.e. the Isle of John, whence Iona." *I'eoin* certainly is very close in sound, as a Gael would pronounce it, to Iona, and there can be little doubt that the island had druids (whether Christian monks also with or without) when Columba landed. Before Conall, King of Alba (as he was called, though only Dalriadic King of Argyll), invited Colum to Iona, to make that island his home and sanctuary, there were certainly Christian monks on the island. Among them was the half-mythical Odran or Oran, who is chronicled in the *Annals of the Four Masters* as having been

a missionary priest, and as having died in Iona fifteen years before Colum landed. Equally certainly there were druids at this late date, though discredited of the Pictish king and his people, for a Cymric priest of the old faith was at that time Ard-Druid. This man Gwendollen, through his bard or second-druid Myrddin (Merlin), deplored the persecution to which he was subject, in that now he and his no longer dared to practise the sacred druidical rites "in raised circles"—adding bitterly, "the grey stones themselves, even, they have removed."

Again, Davies in his *Celtic Researches* speaks of Colum as having on his settlement in Iona burnt a heap of druidical books. It is at any rate certain that druidical believers (helots perhaps) remained to Colum's time, even if the last druidic priest had left. In the explicit accounts which survive there is no word of any dispossession of the druidic priests. It is more than likely that the Pictish king, who had been converted to Christianity, and gave the island to Columba by special grant, had either already seen Irish monks inhabit it, or at least had withdrawn the lingering priests of the ancient faith of his people. Neither Columba nor Adamnan nor any other early chronicler speaks of Iona

as held by the Druids when the little coracle with the cross came into Port-na-Churaich.

Others have derived the name from *Aon*, an isthmus, but the objections to this are that it is not applicable to the island, and perhaps never was ; and, again, the Gaelic pronunciation. Some have thought that the word, when given as *I-Eoin*, was intended, not for the Isle of John, but the Isle of Birds. Here, again, the objection is that there is no reason why Iona should be called by a designation equally applicable to every one of the numberless isles of the west. To the mountaineers of Mull, however, the little low-lying seaward isle must have appeared the haunt of the myriad sea-fowl of the Moyle ; and if the name thus derives, doubtless a Mull man gave it.

Again, it is said that Iona is a miswriting of *Ioua*, "the avowed ancient name of the island." It is easy to see how the scribes who copied older manuscripts might have made the mistake ; and easy to understand how, the mistake once become the habit, fanciful interpretations were adduced to explain "Iona."

There is little reasonable doubt that *Ioua* was the ancient Gaelic or Pictish name of the island. I have frequently seen allusions to

its having been called Innis nan Dhruidnechean, or Dhruidhnean, the Isle of the Druids: but that is not ancient Gaelic, and I do not think there is any record of Iona being so called in any of the early manuscripts. Doubtless it was a name given by the Shenachies or bardic story-tellers of a later date, though of course it is quite possible that Iona was of old commonly called the Isle of the Druids. In this connection I may put on record that a few years ago I heard an old man of the western part of the Long Island (Lewis), speak of the priests and ministers of to-day as "druids"; and once, in either Coll or Tiree, I heard a man say, in English, alluding to the Established minister, "Yes, yes, that will be the way of it, for sure, for Mr. —— is a wise druid." It might well be, therefore, that in modern use the Isle of Druids signified only the Isle of Priests. There is a little island of the Outer Hebrides called Innis Chailleachan Dhubh—the isle of the black old women; and a legend has grown up that witches once dwelt here and brewed storms and evil spells. But the name is not an ancient name, and was given not so long ago, because of a small sisterhood of black-cowled nuns who settled there.

St. Adamnan, ninth Abbot of Iona, writing

at the end of the seventh century, invariably calls the island *Ioua* or the *Iouan Island*. Unless the hypothesis of the careless scribes be accepted, this should be conclusive.

For myself I do not believe that there has been any slip of *n* for *u*. And I am confirmed in this opinion by the following circumstance. Three years ago I was sailing on one of the sea-lochs of Argyll. My only companion was the boatman, and incidentally I happened to speak of some skerries (a group of sea-set rocks) off the Ross of Mull, similarly named to rocks in the narrow kyle we were then passing; and learned with surprise that my companion knew them well, and was not only an Iona man, but had lived on the island till he was twenty. I asked him about his people, and when he found that I knew them he became more confidential. But he professed a strange ignorance of all concerning Iona. There was an old Iona iorram, or boat-song, I was anxious to have: he had never heard of it. Still more did I desire some rendering or even some lines of an ancient chant of whose existence I knew, but had never heard recited, even fragmentarily. He did not know of it: he "did not know Gaelic," that is, he remembered only a

little of it. Well, no, he added, perhaps he did remember some, "but only just to talk to fishermen an' the like."

Suddenly a squall came down out of the hills. The loch blackened. In a moment a froth of angry foam drove in upon us, but the boat righted, and we flew before the blast, as though an arrow shot by the wind. I noticed a startling change in my companion. His blue eyes were wide and luminous; his lips twitched; his hands trembled. Suddenly he stooped slightly, laughed, cried some words I did not catch, and abruptly broke into a fierce and strange sea-chant. It was no other than the old Iona rann I had so vainly sought!

Some memory had awakened in the man, perhaps in part from what I had said—with the old spell of the sea, the old cry of the wind.

Then he ceased abruptly, he relapsed, and with a sheepish exclamation and awkward movement shrank beside me. Alas, I could recall only a few lines; and I failed in every effort to persuade him to repeat the rann. But I had heard enough to excite me, for again and again he had called or alluded to Iona by its ancient pre-Columban name of Ioua, and once at least I was sure, from the

words, that the chant was also to Ioua the Moon.

That night, however, he promised to tell me on the morrow all he could remember of the old Ioua chant. On the morrow, alas, he had to leave upon an unexpected business that could not be postponed, and before his return, three days later, I was gone. I have not seen him again, but it is to him I am indebted for the loan of an ancient manuscript map of Iona, a copy of which I made and have by me still. It was an heirloom: by his own account had been in his family, in Iona, for seven generations, "an it's Himself knows how much more." He had been to the island the summer before, because of his father's death, and had brought this coarsely painted and rudely framed map away with him. He told me too, that night, how the oldest folk on the island—"some three or four o' them, anyway; them as has the Gaelic"—had the old Ioua chant in their minds. As a boy he had heard it at many a winter *ceilidh*. "Ay, ay, for sure, Iona was called Ioua in them old ancient days."

My friend also had a little book of his mother's which contained, in a neat hand, copies of Gaelic songs, among them some of the old Islay and Skye oar-chants of the

*iorram* kind. I recall an iorram that had hardly a word in it, but was only a series of barbaric cries, sometimes full of lament (*hò-ro-aroo-aròne, ho-ro, ah-hòne, ah-hòne!*), which was the Iona fisherman's song to entice seals to come near. I remember, too, the opening of a "maighdean-mhara" or mermaid song, by a little-known namesake of my own, a sister of Mary Macleod, "the sweet singer of the Hebrides," because it had as a heading (perhaps put there by the Iona scribe) some lines of Mary's that I liked well.

I quote from memory, but these were to the effect that, in his home, what the Macleod loved, was playing at chess

*Agus fuaim air a chlarsaich*
*Gus e h'eachdraidh na dheigh sin*
*Greis air ursgeul na Fèine*

[*and the music of the harp, and the telling of tales of the feats of the Féinn* (the Fingalians).] There are not many now, I fear, who could find entertainment thus, or care to sit before the peat-fires.

On one other occasion I have heard the name Ioua used by a fisherman. I was at Strachnr, on Loch Fyne, and was speaking to the skipper of a boat's crew of Macleods from

the Lews, when I was attracted by an old man. He knew my Uist friend, then at Strachur, who told me more than one strange legend of the Sliochd-nan-Ron, the seal-men. I met the old man that night before the peat-glow, and while he was narrating a story of a Princess of Spain who married the King of Ireland's son, he spoke incidentally of their being wrecked on Iona, "that was then called Ioua, ay, an' that for one hundred and two hundred and three hundred years and thrice a hundred on the top o' that before it was Icolmkill."

I did not know him, but a friend told me that the late Mr. Cameron, the minister of Brodick, in Arran, had the M.S. of an old Iona (or Hebridean) iorram, in the refrain of which *Ioua* was used throughout.

Neither do I think the name the island now bears has anything in common with *Ioua*. In a word, I am sure that the derivations of Iona are commonly fanciful, and that the word is simply Gaelic for the Isle of Saints, and was so given it because of Columba and the abbots and monks who succeeded him and his. In Gaelic, the letters *sh* at the beginning of a word are invariably mute; so that *I-shona*, the Isle of Saints, would be pronounced *Iona*. I think that any lingering

doubt I had about the meaning of the name went when I got the old map of which I have spoken, and found that in the left corner was written in large rude letters *II-SHONA*.

How great a man was the Irish monk Crimthan, called Colum, the Dove: Columcille, the Dove of the Church. One may read all that has been written of him since the sixth century, and not reach the depths of his nature. I doubt if any other than a Gael can understand him aright. More than any Celt of whom history tells, he is the epitome of the Celt. In war, Cuchullin himself was not more brave and resourceful. Finn, calling his champions to the pursuit of Grania, or Oisin boasting of the Fianna before Patrick, was not more arrogant, yet his tenderness could be as his Master's was, and he could be as gentle as a young mother with her child, and had a child's simplicity. He knew the continual restlessness of his race. He was forty-two when he settled in Iona, and had led a life of frequent and severe vicissitude, often a wanderer, sometimes with blood against him and upon his head, once in extremity of danger, an outlaw, excommunicated. But even in his haven of Iona he was not content. He journeyed northward

through the Pictish realms, a more dangerous and obscure adventure then than to cross Africa to-day. He sailed to "the Ethican island" as St. Adamnan calls Tiree, and made of it a sanctuary, where prayer might rise as a continual smoke from quiet homes. No fear of the savage clans of Skye—where a woman had once reigned with so great a fame in war that even the foremost champion of Ireland went to her in his youth to learn arms and battle-wisdom — restrained him from facing the island Picts. Long before Hakon the Dane fought the great seafight off Largs on the mainland, Colum had built a church there. In the far Perthshire wilds, before Macbeth slew Duncan the king, the strong abbot of Iona had founded a monastery in that thanedom. At remote Inbhir Nis, the Inverness of to-day, he overcame the King of the Picts and his sullen Druids, by his daring, the fierce magnetism of his will, his dauntless resource. Once, in a savage region, far north-eastward, towards the Scandinavian sea, he was told that there his Cross would not long protect either wattled church or monk's cell: on that spot he built the monastery of Deir, that stood for a thousand years, and whose priceless manuscript is now one of the treasures of Northumbria.

Columba was at once a saint, a warrior, a soldier of Christ, a great abbot, a dauntless explorer, and militant Prince of the Church; and a student, a man of great learning, a poet, an artist, a visionary, an architect, administrator, law-maker, judge, arbiter. As a youth this prince, for he was of royal blood, was so beautiful that he was likened to an angel. In mature manhood, there was none to equal him in stature, manly beauty, strength, and with a voice so deep and powerful that it was like a bell and could be heard on occasion a mile away, and once, indeed, at the court of King Bruidh, literally overbore and drowned a concerted chorus of sullen druids. These had tried to outvoice him and his monks, little knowing what a mighty force the sixty-fourth Psalm could be in the throat of this terrible Culdee, who to them must have seemed much more befitting his house-name, Crimthan (Wolf), than "the Dove"!

This vocal duel was a characteristic device of the Druids. I recall one notable instance long before Colum's time, though the *Leabhar na H'Uidhre* in which it is to be found was not compiled till A.D. 1000. In the story of the love of Connla, son of Conn of the Hundred Battles, for a woman of the other

world, a druid asks her whence she has come, and when she answers that it is from the lands of those who live a beautiful and deathless life, he knows that she is a woman of the *Sìdhe*. So he chants against the fair woman till the spell of her voice is overcome, and she goes away as a mist that falls on the shore, as a Hebridean poet would say.[1]

Later, she comes again, and now invisible to all save Connla. Conn the king hears her chanting to Connla that it is no such lofty place he holds "amid short-lived mortals awaiting fearful death" that he need dread to leave it, "the more as the ever-living ones invite thee to be the ruler over Tethra (a Kingdom of Joy)." So once more the king calls upon the Ard-Druid to dispel the woman by his incantations. For a moment Connla wavers, but the Fairy Woman, with a music of mockery, sings to him that Druidism is in ill-favour "over yonder," little loved and little honoured "there," for, in effect, the nations of the Shee do not need that idle dream. Connla's longing is more great to him than his kingdom or the fires of home,

[1] In a beautiful old Scoto-Gaelic ballad, the "Bàs Fhraoich," occurs the line, *Thuit i air an tràigh na neul*, "she fell on the shore as a mist," though here finely used for a swoon only.

and he goes with his leannanshee in a boat, till those on the strand see him dimly and then no more in that sundown glow, nor ever again. Columba, a poet and scholar familiar with the old tables of his beloved Eiré, probably did not forget on occasion to turn this druidic tale against Druidism itself, repeating how, in its own time, before the little bell of the tonsured folk was heard in Ireland (so little a bell to be the tocsin of fallen gods and broken nations), "Druidism is not loved, for little has it progressed to honour on the great Righteous Strand."

For one thing of great Gaelic import, Columba has been given a singular pre-ëminence—not for his love of country, pride of race, passionate loyalty to his clan, to every blood-claim and foster-claim, and friendship-claim, though in all this he was the very archetype of the clannish Gael—but because (so it is averred) he was the first of our race of whom is recorded the systematic use of the strange gift of spiritual foresight, "second-sight." It has been stated authoritatively that he is the first of whom there is record as having possessed this faculty; but that could only be averred by one ignorant of ancient Gaelic literature. Even in Adamnan's chronicle,

within some seventy years after the death of Columba, there is record of others having this faculty, apart from the perhaps more purely spiritual vision of his mother Aithnê, when an angel raimented her with the beauty of her unborn son, or of his foster-father, the priest Cruithnechan, who saw the singular light of the soul about his sleeping pupil, or of the abbot Brendan who redeemed the saint from excommunication and perhaps death by his vision of him advancing with a pillar of fire before him and an angel on either side. (When, long years afterwards, Brendan died in Ireland, Colum in Iona startled his monks by calling for an immediate celebration of the Eucharist, because it had been revealed to him that St. Brendan had gone to the heavenly fatherland yesternight: "Angels came to meet his soul: I saw the whole earth illumined with their glory.") Among others there is the story of Abbot Kenneth, who, sitting at supper, rose so suddenly as to leave without his sandals, and at the altar of his church prayed for Colum, at that moment in dire peril upon the sea: the story of Ernan, who, fishing in the river Fenda, saw the death of Colum in a symbol of flame: the story of Lugh mac Tailchan, who, at Cloinfinchoil, beheld Iona (which he had never visited), and

above it a blaze of angels' wings, and Colum's soul. In the most ancient tales there is frequent allusion to what we call second-sight. The writers alluded to could not have heard of the warning of the dread Mor-Rigân to Cuchullin before the fatal strife of the Táin-Bó-Cuailgne; or Cuchullin's own pre-vision (among a score as striking) of the hostings and gatherings on the fatal plain of Muirthemne; or the Amazonian queen, Scathach's, fore-knowledge of the career and early death of the champion of the Gaels:

"(At the last) great peril awaits thee . . .
Alone against a vast herd:
Thirty years I reckon the length of thy years
(literally, the strength of thy valour);
Further than this I do not add;"

or of Deirdre's second-sight, when by the white cairn on Sliav Fuad she saw the sons of Usna headless, and Illann the Fair headless too, but Buimne the Ruthless Red with his head upon his shoulders, smiling a grim smile—when she saw over Naois, her beloved, a cloud of blood—or that, alas, too bitter-true a foreseeing, when in the Craebh Derg, the House of the Red Branch, she cried to her lover and his two brothers that death was at the door and "grievous to me is the deed

O darling friends—and till the world's end Emain will not be better for a single night than it is to-night." Or, again, of that pathetic, simultaneous death-vision of Bailê the Sweet-Spoken and Aillinn, he in the north, she in the south, so that each out of a grief unbearable straightway died, as told in one of the oldest as well as loveliest of ancient Gaelic tales, the *Scél Baili Binnbérlaig*.

There is something strangely beautiful in most of these "second-sight" stories of Columba. The faculty itself is so apt to the spiritual law that one wonders why it is so set apart in doubt. It would, I think, be far stranger if there were no such faculty.

That I believe, it were needless to say, were it not that these words may be read by many to whom this quickened inward vision is a superstition, or a fantastic glorification of insight. I believe; not only because there is nothing too strange for the soul, whose vision surely I will not deny, while I accept what is lesser, the mind's prescience, and, what is least, the testimony of the eyes. That I have cause to believe is perhaps too personal a statement, and is of little account; but in that interior wisdom, which is no longer the flicker of one little green leaf but the light and sound of a forest, of which the leaf is a part,

I know that to be true, which I should as soon doubt as that the tide returns or that the sap rises or that dawn is a ceaseless flashing light beneath the circuit of the stars. Spiritual logic demands it.

It would ill become me to do otherwise. I would as little, however, deny that this inward vision is sometimes imperfect and untrustworthy, as I would assert that it is infallible. There is no common face of good or evil; and in like fashion the aspect of this so-called mystery is variable as the lives of those in whom it dwells. With some it is a prescience, more akin to instinct than to reason, and obtains only among the lesser possibilities, as when one beholds another where in the body none is; or a scene not possible, there, in that place; or a face, a meeting of shadows, a disclosure of hazard or accident, a coming into view of happenings not yet fulfilled. With some it is simply a larger sight, more wide, more deep; not habitual, because there is none of us who is not subject to the law of the body; and sudden, because all tense vision is a passion of the moment. It is as the lightning, whose sustenance is sure for all that it has a second's life. With a few it is a more constant companion, a dweller by the morning thought, by the noon

reverie, by the evening dream. It lies upon the pillow for some: to some it as though the wind disclosed pathways of the air; a swaying branch, a dazzle on the wave, the quick recognition in unfamiliar eyes, is, for others, sufficient signal. Not that these accidents of the manner need concern us much. We have the faculty, or we do not have it. Nor must we forget that it can be the portion of the ignoble as well as of those whose souls are clear. When it is in truth a spiritual vision, then we are in company of what is the essential life, that which we call divine.

It was this that Columba had, this serene perspicuity. That it was a conscious possession we know from his own words, for he gave this answer to one who marvelled: "Heaven has granted to some to see on occasion in their mind, clearly and surely, the whole of earth and sea and sky."

It is not unlikely that in the seventy years which elapsed between Colum's death and the writing of that lovely classic of the Church, Adamnan's *Vita St. Columbæ*, some stories grew around the saint's memory which were rather the tribute of childlike reverence and love than the actual experiences of the holy man himself. What then? A field in May

is not the less a daughter of Spring, because the cowslip-wreaths found there may have been brought from little wayward garths by children who wove them lovingly as they came.

Many of these strange records are mere coincidences ; others reveal so happy a surety in the simple faith of the teller that we need only smile, and with no more resentment than at a child who runs to say he has found stars in a wayside pool. Others are rather the keen insight of a ceaseless observation than the seeing of an inward sense. But, and perhaps oftener, they are not inherently incredible. I do not think our forebears did ill to give haven to these little ones of faith, rather than to despise, or to drive them away.

I have already spoken of Columba as another St. Francis, because of his tenderness for creatures. I recall now the lovely legend (for I do not think Colum himself attributed "second-sight" to an animal) which tells how the old white pony which daily brought the milk from the cow-shed to the monastery came and put its head in the lap of the aged and feeble abbot, thus mutely to bid farewell. Let Adamnan tell it : "This creature then coming up to the saint, and knowing that his master would soon depart from him, and

that he would see his face no more, began to utter plaintive moans, and, as if a man, to shed tears in abundance into the saint's lap, and so to weep, frothing greatly. Which when the attendant saw, he began to drive away that weeping mourner. But the saint forbade him, saying, 'Let him alone? As he loves me so, let him alone, that into this my bosom he may pour out the tears of his most bitter lamentation. Behold, thou, a man, that hast a soul, yet in no way hast knowledge of my end save what I have myself shown thee; but to this brute animal the Master Himself hath revealed that his master is about to go away from him.' And so saying, he blessed his sorrowing servant the horse."

If there be any to whom the aged Colum comforting the grief of his old white pony is a matter of disdain or derision, I would not have his soul in exchange for the dumb sorrow of that creature. One would fare further with that sorrow, though soulless, than with the soul that could not understand that sorrow.

If one were to quote from Adamnan's three Books of the Prophecies, Miracles, and Visions of Columba, there would be another book. Amid much that is childlike, and a little that is childish, what store of spiritual

beauty and living symbol in these three books —the Book of Prophetic Revelations, the Book of Miracles of Power, the Book of Angelic Visitations. But there, as elsewhere, one must bear in remembrance that, in spiritual sight, there is symbolic vision as well as actual vision. When Colum saw his friend Columbanus (who, unknown to any on Iona, had set out in his frail coracle from the Isle of Rathlin) tossed in the surges of Corryvrechan; or when, nigh Glen Urquhart, he hurried forward to minister to an old dying Pict "who had lived well by the light of nature," and whose house, condition, and end had been suddenly revealed to him: then we have actual vision. When Aithnê, his mother, dreamed that an angel showed her a garment of so surpassing a loveliness that it was as though woven of flowers and rainbows, and then threw it on high, till its folds expanded and covered every mountain-top from the brows of Connaught to the feet of the Danish sea, and so revealed to her what manner of son she bore within her womb; or when, in the hour of Colum's death, the aged son of Tailchan beheld the whole expanse of air flooded with the blaze of angels' wings, which trembled with their songs: then we have symbolic vision. And sometimes we have that which

partakes of each, as when (as Adamnan tells us in his third book) Colum saw angels standing upon the rocks on the opposite side of the Sound which divides Iona from the Ross of Mull, calling to his soul to cross to them, yet, as they assembled and beckoned, mysteriously and suddenly restrained, for his hour was not come.

And in all actual vision there is gradation; from what is so common, premonition, to what is not common, prescience, and to what is rare, revelation. Thus when the labourers on Iona looked up from the fields and saw the aged abbot whom they so loved, borne in a wagon to give them benediction at seed-sowing, many among them knew that they would not see Colum again, and Colum knew it, and so shared that premonition. And when, many years before, he and the abbot Comgell, returning from a futile conference of the kings Aedh and Aidan, rested by a spring, concerning which Colum said that the day would come when it would be filled with human blood, "because my people, the Hy-Neill, and the Pictish folk, thy relations according to the flesh, will wage war by this fortress of Cethirn close by," Comgell learned, through Colum's foreknowledge, of what did in truth come to pass. Again, when

Colum bade a brother go three days thence to the sea-shore on the west side of Iona, and lie in readiness to help "a certain guest, a crane to wit, beaten by the winds during long and circuitous and aerial flights, which will arrive after the ninth hour of the day, very weary and sore distressed," and bade him to lift it and tend it lovingly for three days and three nights till it should have strength to return to "its former sweet home," and to do this out of love and courtesy because "it comes from our fatherland"—and when all happens and is done as the saint foretold and commanded, then we have revelation, the vision that is absolute, the knowledge that is the atmosphere of the inevitable. It would take a book indeed to tell all the stories of Columba's visionary and prophetic powers. That I write at this length concerning him, indeed, is because he is himself Iona. Columba is Christian Iona, as much as Iona is Icolmkill. I have often wondered (because of a passage in Adamnan) if the island be not indeed named after him, the Dove: for as Adamnan says incidentally, the name Columba is identical with the Hebrew name Jonah, also signifying a Dove, and by the Hebrews pronounced Iona.

It is enough now to recall that this man, so

often erring but so human always, in whose life we see the soul of Iona as in a glass, is become the archetype of his race, as Iona is the microcosm of the Gaelic world. That he came into this life heralded by dreams and visions, that from his youth onward to old age he knew every mystery of dream and vision, and that before and after his death his soul was revealed to others through dreams and visions, is but an added hieratic grace: yet we do well to recall often how these dreams before and these visions after were angelical, and nobly beautiful: how there was left of him, and to his little company, and to us for remembrance, that last signal vision of a blaze of angelic wings, more intolerable than the sun at noon, the tempestuous multitude trembling with the storm of song.

Columba and Oran . . . these are the two great names in Iona. Love and Faith have made one immortal; the other lives also, clothed in legend. I am afraid there is not much definite basis for the popular Iona legend of Oran. It is now the wont of guides and others to speak of the Réilig Odhrain, Oran's burial-place, as that of Columba's friend (and victim), but it seems likelier that the Oran who lies here is he who is spoken

of in the *Annals of the Four Masters* as having died in the year 548, that is fifteen years before Colum came to the island. This, however, might well be a mistake: what is more convincing is that Adamnan never mentions the episode, nor even the name of Oran, nor is there mention of him in that book of Colum's intimate friend and successor, Baithene, which Adamnan practically incorporated. On the other hand, the Oran legend is certainly very old. The best modern rendering we have of it is that of Mr. Whitley Stokes in his *Three Middle-Irish Homilies*, and readers of Dr. Skene's valuable *Celtic Scotland* recollect the translation there redacted. The episode occurs first in an ancient Irish life of St. Columba. The legend, which has crystallised into a popular saying, "Uir, ùir, air sùil Odhrain! mu'n labhair e tuille comhraidh"—"Earth, earth on Oran's eyes, lest he further blab"—avers that three days after the monk Oran or Odran was entombed alive (some say in the earth, some in a cavity), Colum opened the grave, to look once more on the face of the dead brother, when to the amazed fear of the monks and the bitter anger of the abbot himself, Oran opened his eyes and exclaimed, "There is no such great wonder in death, nor is Hell what

it has been described." (Ifrinn, or Ifurin—the word used—is the Gaelic Hell, the Land of Eternal Cold.) At this, Colum straightway cried the now famous Gaelic words, and then covered up poor Oran again lest he should blab further of that uncertain world whither he was supposed to have gone. In the version given by Mr. Whitley Stokes there is no mention of Odran's grave having been uncovered after his entombment. But what is strangely suggestive is that both in the oral legend and in that early monkish chronicle alluded to, Columba is represented as either suggesting or accepting immolation of a living victim as a sacrifice to consecrate the church he intended to build.

One story is that he received a divine intimation to the effect that a monk of his company must be buried alive, and that Odran offered himself. In the earliest known rendering "Colum Cille said to his people: 'It is well for us that our roots should go underground here'; and he said to them, 'It is permitted to you that some one of you go under the earth of this island to consecrate it.' Odran rose up readily, and thus he said: 'If thou wouldst accept me,' he said, 'I am ready for that.' . . . Odran then went to

heaven. Colum Cille then founded the Church of Hii."

It would be a dark stain on Columba if this legend were true. But apart from the fact that Adamnan does not speak of it or of Oran, the probabilities are against its truth. On the other hand, it is, perhaps, quite as improbable that there was no basis for the legend. I imagine the likelier basis to be that a druid suffered death in this fashion under that earlier Odran of whom there is mention in the *Annals of the Four Masters:* possibly, that Odran himself was the martyr, and the Ard-Druid the person who had "the divine intimation." Again, before it be attributed to Columba, one would have to find if there is record of such an act having been performed among the Irish of that day. We have no record of it. It is not improbable that the whole legend is a symbolical survival, an ancient teaching of some elementary mystery through some real or apparent sacrificial rite.

Among the people of Iona to-day there is a very confused idea about St. Oran. To some he is a saint : to others an evil-doer : some think he was a martyr, some that he was punished for a lapse from virtue. Some swear by his grave, as though it were almost as sacred

as the Black Stone of Iona : to others, perhaps most, his is now but an idle name.

By the Black Stone of Iona ! One may hear that in Icolmkill or anywhere in the west. It used to be the most binding oath in the Highlands, and even now is held as an indisputable warrant of truth. In Iona itself, strangely enough, one would be much more likely to hear a statement affirmed "by St. Martin's Cross." On this stone—the old Druidic Stone of Destiny, sacred among the Gael before Christ was born—Columba crowned Aidan King of Argyll. Later, the stone was taken to Dunstaffnage, where the Lords of the Isles were made princes : thence to Scone, where the last of the Celtic Kings of Scotland was crowned on it. It now lies in Westminster Abbey, a part of the Coronation Chair, and since Edward I. every British monarch has been crowned upon it. If ever the Stone of Destiny be moved again, that writing on the wall will be the signature of a falling dynasty ; but perhaps, like Iona in the island saying, this can be left to the Gaelic equivalent of Nevermas, "gus am bi Mac-Cailein na' rìgh," "till Argyll be a king."

In my childhood I well recall meeting in Iona an old man who had come from the

glens of Antrim, to me memorable because he was the last Gaelic minstrel of the old kind I have seen. "It was a poor land, Antrim," he said, "with no Gaelic, a bitter lot o' protestantry, an' little music."

I remember, too, his adding in effect:

"It is in the west you should be if you want music, an' men and women without coldness or the hard mouth. In Donegal an' Mayo an' all down Connemara-way to the cliffs of Moher you'll hear the wind an' the voices o' the Shee with never a man to curse the one or the other." I asked him why he had come to Iona. It was to see the isle of Colum, he said, "St. Bridget's brother, God bless the pair av' thim." He was on his way to Oban, thence to go to a far place in the Athole country, where his daughter had married a factor who had returned to his own land from the Irish west, and was the more dear to the old man because his only living blood-kin, and because she had called her little girl by the name of the old harper's long-lost love, "my love an' my wife."

The last harper, though he had not his harp with him. He had come from Drogheda in a cattle-boat to Islay (whence he had sailed in a fishing-smack to Iona), and his friend the

mate had promised to leave the harp and his other belongings at Oban in safe keeping. He had with him, however, a small instrument that he called his little clar. It was something between a guitar and a cithern, suggestive of a primitive violin, and he played on it sometimes with his fingers, sometimes with a short bit of wood like a child's tipcat; and, he said, could make good music with a hazel-wand or "the dry straight rod of a quicken when that's to be had." He said this quaint instrument had come down to him through fifty-one generations: literally, "eleven and twice twenty *sheanairean* (grandfathers, or elders or forebears)," of whom he could at any moment give the pedigree of *ceithir deug air 'fhichead*," four and ten upon twenty"—that is, to translate the Gaelic method of enumeration, "thirty-four."

This was at the house of a minister then lodging in the island, and it was he who hosted the old harper. He told me, later, that he had no doubt this was the old-world cruit, the Welsh *crwth* of to-day, and the once colloquial Lowland "crowther," akin to the Roman *canora cythara*, the "forebear" of the modern Spanish guitar. To this day, I may add, Highlanders (at least in the west)

call the guitar the *Cruit-Spànleach*. There seems to have been four kinds of "harp" in the old days: the clar or clarsach, the kairneen (ceirnine), the kreemtheencrooth (cream-thine-cruit), and the cionar cruit. The clarsach was the harp proper; that is, the small Celtic harp. The ceirnine was the smaller hand-harp. The "creamthine cruit" had six strings, and was probably used chiefly at festivals, possibly for a strong sonance to accentuate chants; while the cionar cruit had ten strings, and was played either by a bow or with a wooden or other instrument. It must have been a cionar-cruit, ancient or a rude later-day imitation, that the old harper had.

Poor old man, I fear he never played on his harp again; for I learned later that he had found his Athole haven broken up, and his daughter and her husband about to emigrate to Canada, so that he went with them, and died on the way—perhaps as much from the mountain-longing and home-sickness as from any more tangible ill.

I have a double memento of him that I value. In Islay he had bought or been given a little book of Gaelic songs (the Scoto-Gaelic must have puzzled him sorely, poor old *eirionnach*), and this he left behind him, and my

minister friend gave it to me, with much of the above noted down on its end-pages. The little book had been printed early in the century, and was called *Ceilleirean Binn nan Creagan Aosda*, literally "Melodious Little Warblings from the Aged Rocks"; and it has always been dear to me because of one lovely phrase in it about birds, where the unknown Gaelic singer calls them "clann bheag' nam preas," the small clan of the bushes, equivalent in English to "the children of the bushes." This occurs in a lovely verse—

"Mu'n cuairt do bhruachaibh ard mo glinn,
Biodh luba gheuga 's orra blath,
's clann bheag' nam preas a' tabhairst seinn
Do chreagaibh aosd oran graidh."

("Along the lofty sides of my glen let there be bending boughs clad in blossom, and the children of the bushes making the aged rocks re-echo their songs of love")—truly a characteristic Gaelic wish, characteristically expressed.

And though this that I am about to say did not happen on Iona, I may tell it here, for it was there and from an islander I heard it, an old man herding among the troubled rocky pastures of Sguir Mòr and Cnoc na

Fhiona, in the south of that western part called Sliav Starr—one translation of which might be Wuthering Heights, for the word can be rendered wind-blustery or wind-noisy; though I fancy that *starr* is, on Iona, commonly taken to mean a strong coarse grass. (Fhiona here I take to be not the genitive of a name, nor that of "wine," but a mis-spelling of *fionna*, grain.)

When he was a boy he was in the island of Barra, he said, and he had a foster-brother called Iain Macneil. Iain was born with music in his mind, for though he was ever a poor creature as a man, having as a child eaten of the bird's heart, he could hear a power o' wonder in the wind.[1] He had never come to any good in a worldly sense, my old herdsman Micheil said; but it was not from want of cleverness only, but because "he had enough with his music." "Poor man, he failed in everything he did but that—and, sure, that was not against him, for *is ann air an tràghadh a rugadh e*—wasn't he born when the tide was ebbing?" Besides, there was a mystery. Iain's father was said to be an

[1] An allusion to the Hebridean proverb, *Ma dh' itheas tu cridh an eòin, bidh do chridhe air chrith ri d' bheò* ("If you eat the bird's heart, your heart will palpitate for ever.")

Iona man, but that was only a politeness and a play upon words ("*The Holy Isle of the Western Sea*" could mean either Iona or the mystic Hy-Bràsil, or Tir-na-thonn of the underworld); for he had no mortal father, but a man of the Smiling Distant People was his father. Iain's mother had loved her Leannan-shee, her fairy sweetheart, but that love is too strong for a woman to bear, and she died. Before Iain was born she lay under a bush of whitethorn, and her Leannan appeared to her. "I can't give you life," he said, "unless you'll come away with me." But she would not; for she wished the child to have Christian baptism. "Well, good-bye," he said, "but you are a weak love. A woman should care more for her lover than her child. But I'll do this: I'll give the child the dew, an' he won't die, an' we'll take him away when we want him. An' for a gift to him, you can have either beauty or music." "I don't want the dew," she said, "for I'd rather he lay below the grass beside me when his time comes: an' as for beauty, it's been my sorrow. But because I love the songs you have sung to me an' wooed me with, an' made me forget to hide my soul from you—an' it fallen as helpless as a broken wave on damp sand—let the child have the *binn-beul*

an' the *làmh clarsaireachd* (the melodious mouth an' the harping hand)."

And truly enough Iain Macneil "went away." He went back to his own people. It must have been a grief to him not to lie under the grass beside his mother, but it was not for his helping. For days before he mysteriously disappeared he went about making a *ciucharan* like a November wind, a singular plaintive moaning. When asked by his foster-brother Micheil why he was not content, he answered only "*Far am bi mo ghaol, bidh mo thathaich*" (Where my Love is, there must my returning be). He had for days, said Micheil, the mournful crying in the ear that is so often a presage of death or sorrow; and himself had said once "Tha 'n éabh a' m' chenais"—the cry is in my ear. When he went away, that going was the way of the snow.

It is no wonder that legends of Finn and Oisein, of Oscur and Gaul and Diarmid, of Cuchullin, and many of the old stories of the Gaelic chivalry survive in the isles. There, more than in Ireland, Gaelic has survived as the living speech, and though now in the Inner Hebrides it is dying before "an a' Beurla," the English tongue, and still more

before the degraded "Bheurla leathan" or Glasgow-English of the lowland west, the old vernacular still holds an ancient treasure.

The last time I sailed to Staffa from Ulva, a dead calm set in, and we took a man from Gometra to help with an oar—his recommendation being that he was "cho làidir ri Cuchullin," as strong as Coohoolin. But neither in Iona nor in the northward isles nor in Skye itself, have I found or heard of much concerning the great Gaelic hero. Fionn and Oisìn and Diarmid are the names oftenest heard, both in legend and proverbial allusion. An habitual mistake is made by writers who speak of the famous Cuchullin or Cuthullin mountains in Skye as having been named after Cuchullin; and though sometimes the local guides to summer tourists may speak of the Gaelic hero in connection with the mountains north of Corrisk, that is only because of hearsay. The Gaelic name should never be rendered as the Cuthullin or Cohoolin mountains, but as the Coolins. The most obvious meaning of the name *Cuilfhion* (Kyoolyun or Coolun), is "the fine corner," but, as has been suggested, the hills may have got their name because of the "cuillionn mara" or sea-holly, which is pronounced

*Ku' l'-unn* or *coolin.* This is most probably the origin of the name.

In fine weather one may see from Iona the Coolins standing out in lovely blue against the northern sky-line, their contours the most beautiful feature in a view of surpassing beauty. How often I have watched them, have often dreamed of what they have seen, since Oisìn passed that way with Malvina: since Cuchullin learned the feats of war at Dûn Scaaiah, from that great queen whose name, it is said, the island bears in remembrance of her; since Connlaoch, his son, set sail to meet so tragic a death in Ireland. There are two women of Gaelic antiquity who above all others have always held my imagination as with a spell: Scathach or Sgathàith (*sky-ah*), the sombre Amazonian queen of the mountain-island (then perhaps, as now, known also as the Isle of Mist), and Meave, the great queen of Connaught, whose name has its mountain bases in gigantic wars, and its summits among the wild poetry and romance of the Shee.

My earliest knowledge of the heroic cycle of Celtic mythology and history came to me, as a child, when I spent my first summer in Iona. How well I remember a fantastic

legend I was told : how that these far blue mountains, so freaked into a savage beauty, were due to the sword-play of Cuchullin. And this happened because the Queen o' Skye had put a spear through the two breasts of his love, so that he went in among her warrior women and slew every one, and severed the head of Sgàyah herself, and threw it into Coruisk, where to this day it floats as Eilean Dubh, the dark isle. Thereafter, Cuchullin hewed the mountain-tops into great clefts, and trampled the hills into a craggy wilderness, and then rushed into the waves and fought with the sea-hordes till far away the bewildered and terrified stallions of the ocean dashed upon the rocks of Man and uttermost shores of Erin.

This magnificent mountain range can be seen better still from Lunga near Iona, whence it is a short sail with a southerly wind. In Lunga there is a hill called Cnoc Cruit or Dun Cruit, and thence one may see, as in a vast illuminated missal whose pages are of deep blue with bindings of azure and pale gold, innumerable green isles and peaks and hills of the hue of the wild plum. When last I was there it was a day of cloudless June. There was not a sound but the hum of the wild bee foraging in the long garths of

white clover, and the continual sighing of a wave. Listening, I thought I heard a harper playing in the hollow of the hill. It may have been the bees heavy with the wine of honey, but I was content with my fancy and fell asleep, and dreamed that a harper came out of the hill, at first so small that he seemed like the green stalk of a lily and had hands like daisies, and then go great that I saw his breath darkening the waves far out on the Hebrid sea. He played, till I saw the stars fall in a ceaseless, dazzling rain upon Iona. A wind blew that rain away, and out of the wave that had been Iona I saw thousands upon thousands of white doves rise from the foam and fly down the four great highways of the wind. When I woke, there was no one near. Iona lay like an emerald under the wild-plum bloom of the Mull mountains. The bees stumbled through the clover; a heron stood silver-grey upon the grey-blue stone; the continual wave was, as before, as one wave, and with the same hushed sighing.

Two or three years ago I heard a boatman using a singular phrase, to the effect that a certain deed was as kindly a thought as that of the piper who played to St. Micheil in

his grave. I had never heard of this before, or anything like it, nor have I since, on lip or in book. He told me that he spoke of a wandering piper known as Piobaire Raonull Dall, Blind Piper Ronald, who fifty years or so ago used to wander through the isles and West Highlands; and how he never failed to play a spring on his pipes, either to please or to console, or maybe to air a lament for what's lost now and can't come again, when on any holy day he stood before a figure of the Virgin (as he might well do in Barra or South Uist), or by old tombs or habitations of saints. My friend's father or one of his people, once, in the Kyles of Bute, when sailing past the little ruinous graveyard of Kilmichael on the Bute shore, had come upon Raonull-Dall, pacing slowly before the broken stones and the little cell which legend says is both the hermitage and the grave of St. Micheil. When asked what he was playing and what for, in that lonely spot, he said it was an old ancient pibroch, the Gathering of the Clerics, which he was playing just to cheer the heart of the good man down below. When told that St. Micheil would be having his fill of good music where he was, the old man came away in the boat, and for long sat silent and strangely disheartened. I

have more than once since then sailed to that little lonely ancient grave of Kilmichael in the Kyles of Bute, from Tignabruaich or further Cantyre, and have wished that I too could play a spring upon the pipes, for if so I would play to the kind heart of "Piobaire Raonull Dall."

Of all the saints of the west, from St. Molios or Molossius (Maol-Iosa? the servant by Jesus?) who has left his name in the chief township in Arran, to St. Barr, who has given his to the largest of the Bishop's Isles, as the great Barra island-chain in the South Hebrides used to be called, there is none so commonly remembered and so frequently invoked as St. Micheil. There used to be no festival in the Western Isles so popular as that held on 29th September, "La' Fheill Mhicheil," the Day of the Festival of Michael; and the Eve of Michael's Day is still in a few places one of the gayest nights in the year, though no longer is every barn turned into a dancing place or a place of merry-making or, at least, a place for lovers to meet and give betrothal gifts. The day itself, in the Catholic Isles, was begun with a special Mass, and from hour to hour was filled with traditional duties and pleasures.

The whole of the St. Micheil ceremonies were of a remote origin, and some, as the ancient and almost inexplicable dances, and their archaic accompaniment of word and gesture far older than the sacrificial slaying of the Michaelmas Lamb. It is, however, not improbable that this latter rite was a survival of a pagan custom long anterior to the substitution of the Christian for the Druidic faith.

The "Iollach Mhicheil"—the triumphal song of Michael—is quite as much pagan as Christian. We have here, indeed, one of the most interesting and convincing instances of the transmutation of a personal symbol. St. Michael is on the surface a saint of extraordinary powers and the patron of the shores and the shore-folk: deeper, he is an angel, who is upon the sea what the angelical saint, St. George, is upon the land: deeper, he is a blending of the Roman Neptune and the Greek Poseidon: deeper, he is himself an ancient Celtic god: deeper, he is no other than Manannan, the god of ocean and all waters, in the Gaelic Pantheon: as, once more, Manannan himself is dimly revealed to us as still more ancient, more primitive, and even as supreme in remote godhead, the Father of an immortal Clan.

To this day Micheil is sometimes alluded to as the god Micheil, and I have seen some very strange Gaelic lines which run in effect :—

"It was well thou hadst the horse of the god Micheil
Who goes without a bit in his mouth,
So that thou couldst ride him through the fields of the air,
And with him leap over the knowledge of Nature"—

presumably not very ancient as they stand, because of the use of "steud" for horse, and "naduir" for nature, obvious adaptations from English and Latin. Certainly St. Michael has left his name in many places, from the shores of the Hebrides to the famous Mont St. Michel of Brittany, and I doubt not that everywhere an earlier folk, at the same places, called him Manannan. In a most unlikely place to find a record of old hymns and folk-songs, one of the volumes of Reports of the Highlands and Islands Commission, Mr. Carmichael many years ago contributed some of his unequalled store of Hebridean reminiscence and knowledge. Among these old things saved, there is none that is better worth saving than the beautiful Catholic hymn or invocation sung at the time of the midsummer migration to the hill-pastures. In this shealing-hymn the three powers who

are invoked are St. Micheil (for he is a patron saint of horses and travel, as well as of the sea and seafarers), St. Columba, guardian of Cattle, and the Virgin Mary, "Mathair Uain ghil," "Mother of the White Lamb," as the tender Gaelic has it, who is so beautifully called the golden-haired Virgin Shepherdess.

It is pleasant to think of Columba, who loved animals, and whose care for his shepherd-people was always so great, as having become the patron saint of cattle. It is thus that the gods are shaped out of a little mortal clay, the great desire of the heart, and immortal dreams.

I may give the whole hymn in English, as rendered by Mr. Carmichael:

I

"Thou gentle Michael of the white steed,
Who subdued the Dragon of blood,
For love of God and the Son of Mary,
Spread over us thy wing, shield us all!
Spread over us thy wing, shield us all!

II

"Mary beloved! Mother of the White Lamb,
Protect us, thou Virgin of nobleness,
Queen of beauty! Shepherdess of the flocks!
Keep our cattle, surround us together,
Keep our cattle, surround us together.

III

"Thou Columba, the friendly, the kind,
In name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
Through the Three-in-One, through the Three,
Encompass us, guard our procession,
Encompass us, guard our procession.

IV

"Thou Father! Thou Son! Thou Holy Spirit!
Be the Three-One with us day and night,
On the machair plain, on the mountain ridge,
The Three-one is with us, with His arm around our head,
The Three-One is with us, with his arm around our head."

I have heard a paraphrase of this hymn, both in Gaelic and English, on Iona; and once, off Soa, a little island to the south of Icolmkill, took down a verse which I thought was local, but which I afterwards found (with very slight variance) in Mr. Carmichael's Governmental Uist-Record. It was sung by Barra fishermen, and ran in effect "O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! O Holy Trinity, be with us day and night. On the crested wave as on the mountain-side! Our Mother, Holy Mary Mother, has her arm under our head; our pillow is the arm of Mary, Mary the Holy Mother."

It is perhaps the saddest commentary that could be made on what we have lost that the children of those who were wont to go to rest, or upon any adventure, or to stand in the shadow of death, with some such words as

> "My soul is with the Light on the mountains,
> Archangel Micheil shield my soul!"

now go or stand in a scornful or heedless silence, or without remembrance, as others did who forgot to trim their lamps.

Who now would go up to the hill-pastures singing the Beannachadh Buachailleag, the Herding Blessing? With the passing of the old language the old solemnity goes, and the old beauty, and the old patient, loving wonder. I do not like to think of what songs are likely to replace the Herding Blessing, whose first verse runs thus:

> "I place this flock before me
> As ordained by the King of the World,
> Mary Virgin to keep them, to wait them, to watch them.
> On hill and glen and plain,
> On hill, in glen, on plain."

In the maelstrom of the cities the old race perishes, drowns. How common the foolish utterance of narrow lives, that all these old ways of thought are superstitious. To have

a superstition is, for these, a worse ill than to have a shrunken soul. I do not believe in spells and charms and foolish incantations, but I think that ancient wisdom out of the simple and primitive heart of an older time is not an ill heritage; and if to believe in the power of the spirit is to be superstitious, I am well content to be of the company that is now forsaken.

But even in what may more fairly be called superstitious, have we surety that we have done well in our exchange?

A short while ago I was on the hillside above one of the much-frequented lochs in eastern Argyll. Something brought to my mind, as I went farther up into the clean solitudes, one of the verses of the Herding Blessing:

> "From rocks, from snow-wreaths, from streams,
> From crooked ways, from destructive pits,
> From the arrows of the slim fairy women,
> From the heart of envy, the eye of evil,
> Keep us, Holy St. Bride."

"From the arrows of the slim fairy women." And I—do I believe in that? At least it will be admitted that it is worth a belief; it is a pleasant dream; it is a gate into a lovely world; it is a secret garden, where are old

sweet echoes; it has the rainbow-light of poetry. Is it not poetry? And I—oh yes, I believe it, that superstition: a thousand-fold more real is it, more believable, than that coarse-tongued, ill-mannered, boorish people, desperate in slovenly pleasure. For that will stay, and they will go. And if I am wrong, then I will rather go with it than stay with them. And yet—surely, surely the day will come when this sordidness of life as it is so often revealed to us will sink into deep waters, and the stream become purified, and again by its banks be seen the slim fairy women of health and beauty and all noble and dignified things.

This is a far cry from Iona! And I had meant to write only of how I heard so recently as three or four summers ago a verse of the Uist Herding Chant. It was recited to me, over against Dûn-I, by a friend who is a crofter in that part of Iona. It was not quite as Mr. Carmichael translates it, but near enough. The Rann Buachhailleag is, I should add, addressed to the cattle.

"The protection of God and Columba
Encompass your going and coming,
And about you be the milkmaid of the smooth white palms,
Briget of the clustering hair, golden brown."

On Iona, however, there is, so far as I remember, no special spot sacred to St. Micheil: but there is a legend that on the night Columba died Micheil came over the waves on a rippling flood of light, which was a cloud of angelic wings, and that he sang a hymn to the soul of the saint before it took flight for its heavenly fatherland. No one heard that hymn save Colum, but I think that he who first spoke of it remembered a more ancient legend of how Manannan came to Cuchullin when he was in the country of the Shee, when Liban laughed.

I spoke of Port-na-Churaich, the Haven of the Coracle, a little ago. How strange a history is that of Iona since the coming of the Irish priest, Crimthan, or Crimmon as we call the name, surnamed Colum Cille, the Dove of the Church. Perhaps its unwritten history is not less strange. God was revered on Iona by priests of a forgotten faith before the Cross was raised. The sun-priest and the moon-worshipper had their revelation here. I do not think their offerings were despised. Colum, who loved the Trinity so well that on one occasion he subsisted for three days on the mystery of the mere word, did not forego the luxury of human sacrifice, though he ab-

horred the blood-stained altar. For, to him, an obstinate pagan slain was to the glory of God. The moon-worshipper did no worse when he led the chosen victim to the dolmen. But the moon-worshipper was a Pict without the marvel of the written word ; so he remained a heathen, and the Christian named himself saint or martyr.

None knows with surety who dwelled on this mysterious island before the famous son of Feilim of Clan Domnhuil, great-grandson of Niall of the Nine Hostages, came with his fellow-monks and raised the Cross among the wondering Picts. But the furthest record tells of worship. Legend itself is more ancient here than elsewhere. Once a woman was worshipped. Some say she was the moon, but this was before the dim day of the moon-worshippers. (In Gaelic too, as with all the Celtic peoples, it is not the moon but the sun that is feminine.) She may have been an ancestral Brighde, or that mysterious Anait whose Scythian name survives elsewhere in the Gaelic west, and nothing else of all her ancient glory but that shadowy word. Perhaps, here, the Celts remembered one whom they had heard of in Asian valleys or by the waters of Nilus, and called upon Isis under a new name.

The Haven of the Coracle! It was not Colum and his white-robe company who first made the isle sacred. I have heard that when Mary Macleod (our best-loved Hebridean poet) was asked what she thought of Iona, she replied that she thought it was the one bit of Eden that had not been destroyed, and that it was none other than the central isle in the Garden untouched of Eve or Adam, where the angels waited.

Many others have dreamed by that lonely cairn of the Irish king, before Colum, and, doubtless, many since the child who sought the Divine forges.

Years afterwards I wrote, in the same place, after an absence wherein Iona had become as a dream to me, the story of St. Briget, in the Hebrides called Bride, under the love-name commonly given her, Muime Chriosd—Christ's Foster-Mother. May I quote again, here, as so apposite to what I have written, to what indirectly I am trying to convey of the spiritual history of Iona, some portion of it?

In my legendary story I tell of how one called Dùghall, of a kingly line, sailing from Ireland, came to be cast upon the ocean-shore of Iona, then called Innis-nan-Dhruidhneach,

the Isle of the Druids—for this was before the cry of the Sacred Wolf was heard, as an old-time island-poet has it, playing upon Colum's house-name, Crimthan, signifying a wolf. The frail coracle in which he and others had crossed the Moyle had been driven before a tempest, and cast at sunrise like a spent fish upon the rocks of the little haven that is now called Port-na-Churaich. All had found death in the wave except himself and the little girl-child he had brought with him from Ireland, the child of so much tragic mystery.

When, warmed by the sun, they rose, they found themselves in a waste place. Dùghall was ill in his mind because of the portents, and now to his fear and amaze the child Briget knelt on the stones, and, with claspt hands, frail and pink as the sea-shells round about her, sang a song of words which were unknown to him. This was the more marvellous, as she was yet but an infant, and could say few words even of Erse, the only tongue she had heard.

At this portent, he knew that Aodh the Arch-Druid had spoken seeingly. Truly this child was not of human parentage. So he, too, kneeled; and, bowing before her, asked if she were of the race of the Tuatha de

Danann, or of the older gods, and what her will was, that he might be her servant. Then it was that the kneeling child looked at him, and sang in a low sweet voice in Erse :

"I am but a little child,
Dùghall, son of Hugh, son of Art,
But my garment shall be laid
On the lord of the world,
Yea, surely it shall be that He,
The King of Elements Himself,
Shall lean against my bosom,
And I will give him peace,
And peace will I give to all who ask
Because of this mighty Prince,
And because of his Mother that is the Daughter of Peace."

And while Dùghall Donn was still marvelling at this thing, the Arch-Druid of Iona approached, with his white-robed priests. A grave welcome was given to the stranger. While the youngest of the servants of God was entrusted with the child, the Arch-Druid took Dùghall aside and questioned him. It was not till the third day that the old man gave his decision. Dùghall Don was to abide on Iona if he so willed ; but the child was to stay. His life would be spared, nor would he be a bondager of any kind, and a little land to till would be given him, and all

that he might need. But of his past he was to say no word. His name was to become as nought, and he was to be known simply as Dùvach. The child, too, was to be named Bride, for that was the way the name Briget is called in the Erse of the Isles.

To the question of Dùghall, that was thenceforth Dùvach, as to why he laid so great stress on the child, who was a girl, and the reputed offspring of shame at that, Cathal the Arch-Druid replied thus: "My kinsman Aodh of the golden hair, who sent you here, was wiser than Hugh the king, and all the Druids of Aoimag. Truly, this child is an Immortal. There is an ancient prophecy concerning her: surely of her who is now here, and no other. There shall be, it says, a spotless maid born of a virgin of the ancient divine race in Innisfail. And when for the seventh time the sacred year has come, she will hold Eternity in her lap as a white flower. Her maiden breasts shall swell with milk for the Prince of the World. She shall give suck to the King of the Elements. So I say unto you, Dùvach, go in peace. Take unto yourself a wife, and live upon the place I will allot on the east side of Ioua. Treat Bride as though she were your soul, and leave her much alone, and let her learn of the sun and the wind. In

the fulness of time the prophecy shall be fulfilled."

So was it, from that day of the days. Dùvach took a wife unto himself, who weaned the little Bride, who grew in beauty and grace, so that all men marvelled. Year by year for seven years the wife of Dùvach bore him a son, and these grew apace in strength, so that by the beginning of the third year of the seventh circle of Bride's life there were three stalwart youths to brother her, and three comely and strong lads, and one young boy fair to see. Nor did any one, not even Bride herself, saving Cathal the Arch-Druid, know that Dùvach the herdsman was Dùghall Donn, of a princely race in Innisfail.

In the end, too, Dùvach came to think that he had dreamed, or at the least that Cathal had not interpreted the prophecy aright. For though Bride was of exceeding beauty, and of a holiness that made the young druids bow before her as though she were a bàndia, yet the world went on as before, and the days brought no change. Often, while she was still a child, he had questioned her about the words she had said as a babe, but she had no memory of them. Once, in her ninth year, he came upon her on the hillside of Dûn-I singing these self-same words. Her eyes

dreamed far away. He bowed his head, and, praying to the Giver of Light, hurried to Cathal. The old man bade him speak no more to the child concerning the mysteries.

Bride lived the hours of her days upon the slopes of Dûn-I, herding the sheep, or in following the kye upon the green hillocks and grassy dunes of what then, as now, was called the Machar. The beauty of the world was her daily food. The spirit within her was like sunlight behind a white flower. The birdeens in the green bushes sang for joy when they saw her blue eyes. The tender prayers that were in her heart were often seen flying above her head in the form of white doves of sunshine.

But when the middle of the year came that was (though Dùvach had forgotten it) the year of the prophecy, his eldest son, Conn, who was now a man, murmured against the virginity of Bride, because of her beauty and because a chieftain of the mainland was eager to wed her. "I shall wed Bride or raid Ioua," was the message he had sent.

So one day, before the Great Fire of the Summer Festival, Conn and his brothers reproached Bride.

"Idle are these pure eyes, O Bride, not to be as lamps at thy marriage-bed."

"Truly, it is not by the eyes that we live," replied the maiden gently, while to their fear and amazement she passed her hand before her face and let them see that the sockets were empty.

Trembling with awe at this portent, Dùvach intervened :

"By the sun I swear it, O Bride, that thou shalt marry whomsoever thou wilt and none other, and when thou wilt, or not at all, if such be thy will."

And when he had spoken, Bride smiled, and passed her hand before her face again, and all there were abashed because of the blue light as of morning that was in her shining eyes.

It was while the dew was yet wet on the grass that on the morrow Bride came out of her father's house, and went up the steep slope of Dûn-I. The crying of the ewes and lambs at the pastures came plaintively against the dawn. The lowing of the kye arose from the sandy hollows by the shore, or from the meadows on the lower slopes. Through the whole island went a rapid, trickling sound, most sweet to hear : the myriad voices of twittering birds, from the dotterel in the sea-weed, to the larks climbing the blue slopes of heaven.

This was the festival of her birth, and she was clad in white. About her waist was a girdle of the sacred rowan, the feathery green leaves flickering dusky shadows upon her robe as she moved. The light upon her yellow hair was as when morning wakes, laughing in wind amid the tall corn. As she went she sang to herself, softly as the crooning of a dove. If any had been there to hear he would have been abashed, for the words were not in Erse, and the eyes of the beautiful girl were as those of one in a vision.

When, at last, a brief while before sunrise, she reached the summit of the Scuir, that is so small a hill and yet seems so big in Iona, where it is the sole peak, she found three young druids there, ready to tend the sacred fire the moment the sunrays should kindle it. Each was clad in a white robe, with fillets of oak leaves; and each had a golden armlet. They made a quiet obeisance as she approached. One stepped forward, with a flush in his face because of her beauty, that was as a sea-wave for grace and a flower for purity, as sunlight for joy and moonlight for peace.

"Thou mayst draw near if thou wilt, Bride, daughter of Dùvach," he said, with something of reverence as well as of grave courtesy in his voice; "for the holy Cathal

hath said that the breath of the Source of All is upon thee. It is not lawful for women to be here at this moment, but thou hast the law shining upon thy face and in thine eyes. Hast thou come to pray?"

But at that moment a cry came from one of his companions. He turned, and rejoined his fellows. Then all three sank upon their knees, and with outstretched arms hailed the rising of God.

As the sun rose, a solemn chant swelled from their lips, ascending as incense through the silent air. The glory of the new day came soundlessly. Peace was in the blue heaven, on the blue-green sea, and on the green land. There was no wind, even where the currents of the deep moved in shadowy purple. The sea itself was silent, making no more than a sighing slumber-breath round the white sands of the isle, or a dull whisper where the tide lifted the long weed that clung to the rocks.

In what strange, mysterious way, Bride did not see; but as the three druids held their hands before the sacred fire there was a faint crackling, then three thin spirals of blue smoke rose, and soon dusky red and wan yellow tongues of flame moved to and fro. The sacrifice of God was made. Out of the im-

measurable heaven He had come, in His golden chariot. Now, in the wonder and mystery of His love, He was re-born upon the world, re-born a little fugitive flame upon a low hill in a remote isle. Great must be His love that He could die thus daily in a thousand places: so great His love that he could give up His own body to daily death, and suffer the holy flame that was in the embers He illumined to be lighted and revered and then scattered to the four quarters of the world.

Bride could bear no longer the mystery of this great love. It moved her to an ecstasy. What tenderness of divine love that could thus redeem the world daily: what long-suffering for all the evil and cruelty done hourly upon the weeping earth: what patience with the bitterness of the blind fates! The beauty of the worship of Be'al was upon her as a golden glory. Her heart leaped to a song that could not be sung.

Bowing her head, so that the tears fell upon her hands, she rose and moved away.

Elsewhere I have told how a good man of Iona sailed along the coast one Sabbath afternoon with the Holy Book, and put the Word upon the seals of Soa: and, in another tale,

how a lonely man fought with a sea-woman, that was a seal; as, again, how two fishermen strove with the sea-witch of Earraid: and, in "The Dan-nan-Ron," of a man who went mad with the sea-madness, because of the seal-blood that was in his veins, he being a MacOdrum of Uist, and one of the Sliochd nan Ron, the Tribe of the Seal. And those who have read the tale, twice printed, once as "The Annir Choille," and again as "Cathal of the Woods," will remember how, at the end, the good hermit Molios, when near death in his sea-cave of Arran, called the seals to come out of the wave and listen to him, so that he might tell them the white story of Christ; and how in the moonshine, with the flowing tide stealing from his feet to his knees, the old saint preached the gospel of love, while the seals crouched upon the rocks, with their brown eyes filled with glad tears: and how, before his death at dawn, he was comforted by hearing them splashing to and fro in the moon-dazzle, and calling one to the other, "We, too, are of the sons of God."

What has so often been written about is a reflection of what is in the mind: and though stories of the seals may be heard from the Rhinns of Islay to the Seven Hunters (and I first heard that of the MacOdrums, the seal-

folk, from a Uist man), I think that it was because of what I heard of the sea-people on Iona, when I was a child, that they have been so much with me in remembrance.

In the short tale of the Moon-child, I told how two seals that had been wronged by a curse which had been put upon them by Columba, forgave the saint. and gave him a sore-won peace. I recall another (unpublished) tale, where a seal called Domnhuil Dhu—a name of evil omen—was heard laughing one Hallowe'en on the rocks below the ruined abbey, and calling to the creatures of the sea that God was dead: and how the man who heard him laughed, and was therewith stricken with paralysis, and so fell sidelong from the rocks into the deep wave, and was afterwards found beaten as with hammers and shredded as with sharp fangs.

But, as most characteristic, I would rather tell here the story of Black Angus, though the longer tale of which it forms a part has been printed before.

One night, a dark rainy night it was, with an uplift wind battering as with the palms of savage hands the heavy clouds that hid the moon, I went to the cottage near Spanish Port, where my friend Ivor Maclean lived with his old deaf mother. He had reluctantly

promised to tell me the legend of Black Angus, a request he had ignored in a sullen silence when he and Padruic Macrae and I were on the Sound that day. No tales of the kind should be told upon the water.

When I entered, he was sitting before the flaming coal-fire ; for on Iona now, by decree of MacCailein Mòr, there is no more peat burned.

"You will tell me now, Ivor?" was all I said.

"Yes ; I will be telling you now. And the reason why I never told you before was because it is not a wise or a good thing to tell ancient stories about the sea while still on the running wave. Macrae should not have done that thing. It may be we shall suffer for it when next we go out with the nets. We were to go to-night ; but, no, not I, no, no, for sure, not for all the herring in the Sound."

"Is it an ancient *sgeul*, Ivor?"

"Ay. I am not for knowing the age of these things. It may be as old as thè days of the Féinn, for all I know. It has come down to us. Alasdair MacAlasdair of Tiree, him that used to boast of having all the stories of Colum and Brigdhe, it was he told it to the mother of my mother, and she to me."

"What is it called?"

"Well, this and that; but there is no harm in saying it is called the Dark Nameless One."

"The Dark Nameless One!"

"It is this way. But will you ever have heard of the MacOdrums of Uist?"

"Ay; the Sliochd-nan-ròn."

"That is so. God knows. The Sliochd-nan-ron . . . the progeny of the Seal. . . . Well, well, no man knows what moves in the shadow of life. And now I will be telling you that old ancient tale, as it was given to me by the mother of my mother."

On a day of the days, Colum was walking alone by the sea-shore. The monks were at the hoe or the spade, and some milking the kye, and some at the fishing. They say it was on the first day of the *Faoilleach Geamhraidh*, the day that is called *Am Fhéill Brighde*, and that they call Candlemas over yonder.

The holy man had wandered on to where the rocks are, opposite to Soa. He was praying and praying; and it is said that whenever he prayed aloud, the barren egg in the nest would quicken, and the blighted bud unfold, and the butterfly break its shroud.

Of a sudden he came upon a great black seal, lying silent on the rocks, with wicked eyes.

"My blessing upon you, O Ròn," he said, with the good kind courteousness that was his. "*Droch spadadh ort*," answered the seal, "A bad end to you, Colum of the Gown."

"Sure now," said Colum angrily, "I am knowing by that curse that you are no friend of Christ, but of the evil pagan faith out of the north. For here I am known ever as Colum the White, or as Colum the Saint; and it is only the Picts and the wanton Normen who deride me because of the holy white robe I wear."

"Well, well," replied the seal, speaking the good Gaelic as though it were the tongue of the deep sea, as God knows it may be for all you, I, or the blind wind can say; "well, well, let that thing be: it's a wave-way here or a wave-way there. But now, if it is a druid you are, whether of fire or of Christ, be telling me where my woman is, and where my little daughter."

At this, Colum looked at him for a long while. Then he knew.

"It is a man you were once, O Ròn?"

"Maybe ay and maybe no."

"And with that thick Gaelic that you have, it will be out of the north isles you come?"

"That is a true thing."

"Now I am for knowing at last who and what you are. You are one of the race of Odrum the Pagan?"

"Well, I am not denying it, Colum. And what is more, I am Angus MacOdrum, Aonghas mac Torcall mhic Odrum, and the name I am known by is Black Angus."

"A fitting name too," said Colum the Holy, "because of the black sin in your heart, and the black end God has in store for you."

At that Black Angus laughed.

"Why is the laughter upon you, Man-Seal?"

"Well, it is because of the good company I'll be having. But, now, give me the word: Are you for having seen or heard of a woman called Kirsteen M'Vurich?"

"Kirsteen—Kirsteen—that is the good name of a nun it is, and no sea-wanton!"

"O, a name here or a name there is soft sand. And so you cannot be for telling me where my woman is?"

"No."

"Then a stake for your belly, and nails

through your hands, thirst on your tongue, and the corbies at your eyne!"

And, with that, Black Angus louped into the green water, and the hoarse wild laugh of him sprang into the air and fell dead upon the shore like a wind-spent mew.

Colum went slowly back to the brethren, brooding deep. "God is good," he said in a low voice, again and again; and each time that he spoke there came a daisy into the grass, or a bird rose, with song to it for the first time, wonderful and sweet to hear.

As he drew near to the House of God he met Murtagh, an old monk of the ancient race of the isles.

"Who is Kirsteen M'Vurich, Murtagh?" he asked.

"She was a good servant of Christ, she was, in the south isles, O Colum, till Black Angus won her to the sea."

"And when was that?"

"Nigh upon a thousand years ago."

"But can mortal sin live as long as that?"

"Ay, it endureth. Long, long ago, before Oisìn sang, before Fionn, before Cuchullin, was a glorious great prince, and in the days when the Tuatha-de-Danann were sole lords in all green Banba, Black Angus made the woman Kirsteen M'Vurich leave the place of

prayer and go down to the sea-shore, and there he leaped upon her and made her his prey, and she followed him into the sea."

"And is death above her now?"

"No. She is the woman that weaves the sea-spells at the wild place out yonder that is known as Earraid: she that is called the sea-witch."

"Then why was Black Angus for the seeking her here and the seeking her there?"

"It is the Doom. It is Adam's first wife she is, that sea-witch over there, where the foam is ever in the sharp fangs of the rocks."

"And who will he be?"

"His body is the body of Angus, the son of Torcall of the race of Odrum, for all that a seal he is to the seeming; but the soul of him is Judas."

"Black Judas, Murtagh?"

"Ay, Black Judas, Colum."

But with that, Ivor Macrae rose abruptly from before the fire, saying that he would speak do more that night. And truly enough there was a wild, lone, desolate cry in the wind, and a slapping of the waves one upon the other with an eerie laughing sound, and the screaming of a seamew that was like a human thing.

So I touched the shawl of his mother, who looked up with startled eyes and said, "God be with us"; and then I opened the door, and the salt smell of the wrack was in my nostrils, and the great drowning blackness of the night.

When I was a child I used to throw offerings—small coins, flowers, shells, even a newly caught trout, once a treasured flint arrow-head—into the sea-loch by which we lived. My Hebridean nurse had often told me of Shony, a mysterious sea-god, and I know I spent much time in wasted adoration: a fearful worship, not unmixed with disappointment and some anger. Not once did I see him. I was frighted time after time, but the sudden cry of a heron, or the snort of a pollack chasing the mackerel, or the abrupt uplifting of a seal's head, became over-familiar, and I desired terror, and could not find it by the shore. Inland, after dusk, there was always the mysterious multitude of shadow. There too, I could hear the wind leaping and growling. But by the shore I never knew any dread, even in the darkest night. The sound and company of the sea washed away all fears.

I was amused not long ago to hear a little girl singing, as she ran wading through the

foam of a troubled sunlit sea, as it broke on those wonderful white sands of Iona—

> "Shanny, Shanny, Shanny,
> Catch my feet and tickle my toes!
> And if you can, Shanny, Shanny, Shanny,
> I'll go with you where no one knows!"

I have no doubt this daintier Shanny was my old friend Shony, whose more terrifying way was to clutch boats by the keel and drown the sailors, and make a death-necklace of their teeth. An evil Shony; for once he netted a young girl who was swimming in a loch, and when she would not give him her love he tied her to a rock, and to this day her long brown hair may be seen floating in the shallow green wave at the ebb of the tide. One need not name the place!

The Shanny song recalls to me an old Gaelic alphabet rhyme, wherein a *Maighdeann-M'hara*, or Mermaid, stood for M, and a Suire (also a mermaid) stood for S; and my long perplexities as to whether I would know a shuera from a midianmara when I saw either. It also recalls to me that it was from a young schoolmaster priest, who had come back from Ireland to die at home, that I first heard of the Beth-Luis-Nuin, the Gaelic equivalent of "the A B C." Every letter in

the Gaelic alphabet is represented by a tree, and Beithe and Luis and Nuin are the Birch, the Rowan, and the Ash. The reason why the alphabet is called the Beth-Luis-Nuin is that B, L, N, and not A, B, C, are its first three letters. It consists of eighteen letters—and in ancient Gaelic seventeen, for H (the Uath, or Whitethorn) does not exist there, I believe: and these run, B, L, N, F, S (H), D, T, C, M, G, P, R, A, O, U, E, I—each letter represented by the name of a tree, Birch, Rowan, Ash, etc. Properly, there is no C in Gaelic, for though the letter C is common, it has always the sound of K.

Since this page first appeared I have had so many letters about the Gaelic alphabet of to-day that I take the opportunity to add a few lines. To-day as of old all the letters of the Gaelic alphabet are called after trees, from the oak to the shrub-like elder, with the exception of G, T, and U, which stand for Ivy, Furze and Heather. It no longer runs B, L, N, etc., but in sequence follows the familiar and among western peoples, universal A, B, C, etc. It is, however, short of our Roman alphabet by eight letters J, K, Q, V, W, X, Y and Z. On the other hand, each of these is represented, either by some other letter having a like value or by a combination:

thus K is identical with C, which does not exist in Gaelic as a soft sound any more than it does in Greek, but only as the C in English words such as *cat* or *cart*, or in combination with h as a gutteral as in *loch*—while v as common a sound in Gaelic as the hiss of s in English exists in almost every second or third word as *bh* or *mh*. The Gaelic A, B, C of to-day, then, runs as follows: Ailm, Beite, Coll, Durr, Eagh, Fearn, Gath, Huath, Togh, Luis, Muin, Nuin, Oir, Peith, Ruis, Suil, Teine, Ur—which again is equivalent to saying Elm, Birch, Hazel, Oak, Aspen, Alder, Ivy, Whitethorn, Yew, Rowan or Quicken, Vine, Ash, Spindle-tree, Pine, Elder, Willow, Furze, Heath.

The little girl who knew so much about Shanny knew nothing about her own A B C. But I owe her a debt, since through her I came upon my good friend "Gunainm." From her I heard first, there on Iona, on a chance visit of a few summer days, of two of the most beautiful of the ancient Gaelic hymns, the Fiacc Hymn and the Hymn of Broccán. My friend had delineated them as missals, with a strangely beautiful design to each. How often I have thought of one, illustrative of a line in the Fiacc Hymn: "There was pagan darkness in Eiré in those days: the

people adored Faerie." In the Broccán Hymn (composed by one Broccán in the time of Lugaid, son of Loegaire, A.D. 500) is one particularly lovely line: "Victorious Bride (Briget) loved not this vain world: here, ever, she sat the seat of a bird on a cliff."

In a dream I dream frequently, that of being the wind, and drifting over fragrant hedgerows and pastures, I have often, through unconscious remembrance of that image of St. Bride sitting the seat of a bird on the edge of the cliff that is this world, felt myself, when not lifted on sudden warm fans of dusk, propelled as on a swift wing from the edge of a precipice.

I would that we had these winds of dream to command. I would, now that I am far from it, that this night at least I might pass over Iona, and hear the sea-doves by the ruins making their sweet mournful croon of peace, and lift, as a shadow gathering phantom flowers, the pale orchis by the lapwing's nest.

One day, walking by a reedy lochan on the Ross of Mull, not far inland from Fionnaphort, where is the ferry for Baile-Mòr of Iona, I met an old man who seemed in sorrow. When he spoke I was puzzled by some words

which were not native there, and then I learned that he had long lived in Edinburgh and later in Dunfermline, and in his work had associated with Hollanders and others of the east seas.

He had come back, in his old age, to "see the place of his two loves"—the hamlet in Earraid, where his old mother had blessed him "forty year back," and the little farm where Jean Cameron had kissed him and promised to be true. He had gone away as a soldier, and news reached them of his death; and when he came out of the Indies, and went up Leith Walk to the great post-house in Edinburgh, it was to learn that the Earraid cottage was empty, and that Jean was no longer Jean Cameron.

There was not a touch of bitterness in the old man's words. "It was my name, for one thing," he said simply: "you see, there's many a 'J. Macdonald' in the Highland regiments; and the mistake got about that way. No, no—the dear lass wasna to blame. And I never lost her love. When I found out where she was I went to see her once more, an' to tell her I understood, an' loved her all the same. It was hard, in a way, when I found she had made a loveless marriage, but human nature's human nature, an' I could not

but be proud and glad that she had nane but puir Jamie Macdonald in her heart. I told her I would be true to her, and since she was poor, would help her, an' wi' God's kindness true I was, an' helped her too. For her man did an awfu' business one day, and was sentenced for life. She had three bairns. Well, I keepit her an' them—though I ne'er saw them but once in the year, for she had come back to the west, her heart brast with the towns. First one bairn died, then another. Then Jean died."

The old man resumed suddenly: "I had put all my savings into the Grand North Bank. When that failed I had nothing, for with the little that was got back I bought a good 'prenticeship for Jean's eldest. Since then I've lived by odd jobs. But I'm old now, an' broke. Every day an' every night I think o' them two, my mother an' Jean."

"She must have been a leal fine woman," I said, but in Gaelic. With a flash he looked at me, and then said slowly, as if remembering, "*Eudail de mhnathan an domhain*," "Treasure of all the women in the world."

I have often thought of old "Jamie Macdonald" since. How wonderful his deep love! This man was loyal to his love in long absence, and was not less loyal when he found

that she was the wife of another; and gave up thought of home and comfort and companionship, so that he might make life more easy for her and the children that were not his. He had no outer reward for this, nor looked for any.

We crossed to Baile-Mòr together, and when I came upon him next day by the Reilig Odhrain, I asked him what he thought of Iona.

He looked at the grey worn stones, "the stairway of the kings," the tombs, the carved crosses, the grey ruins of the wind-harried cathedral, and with a wave of his hand, said simply, "*Comunn mo ghaoil*," "'Tis a companionship after my heart."

I do not doubt that the old man went on his way comforted by the grey silence and grey beauty of this ancient place, and that he found in Iona what would be near him for the rest of his days.

As a child I had some wise as well as foolish instruction concerning the nations of Faerie. If, in common with nearly all happy children, I was brought up in intimate, even in circumstantial, knowledge of "the fairies" —being charitably taught, for one thing, so that I have often left a little bowl of milk, a

saucerful of oatcake and honey, and the like, under a wooden seat, where they would be sure to see it—I was told also of the Sìdhe, often so rashly and ignorantly alluded to as the fairies in the sense of a pretty, diminutive, harmless, natural folk; and by my nurse Barabal instructed in some of the ways, spells, influences, and even appearances of these powerful and mysterious clans.

I do not think, unless as a very young child, I ever confused them. I recollect well my pleasure at a sign of gratitude. I was fond of making little reed or bulrush or ash flutes, but once I was in a place where these were difficult to get, and I lost the only one I had. That night I put aside a small portion of my supper of bread and milk and honey, and remember also the sacrifice of a gooseberry of noble proportions, relinquished, not without a sigh, in favour of any wandering fairy lad.

Next morning when I ran out—three of us then had a wild morning performance we called some fantastic, forgotten name, and ourselves the Sun-dancers—I saw by the emptied saucer my little reed-flute! Here was proof positive! I was so grateful for that fairy's gratitude, that when dusk came again

I not only left a larger supper-dole than usual, but, decked with white fox-glove bells (in which I had unbounded faith), sat drenched in the dew and played my little reed. Any moment (I was sure) a small green fellow would appear, and with wild indignation I found myself snatched from the grass, and my ears dinned now with reproaches about the dew, now with remonstrances against "that frightfu' reed-screeching that scared awa' the varry hens."

Ah, there are souls that know nothing of fairies, or music!

But the Sìdhe are a very different people from the small clans of the earth's delight.

However (though I could write of both a great volume), I have little to say of either just now, except in one connection.

It is commonly said that the People of the Sìdhe dwell within the hills, or in the underworld. In some of the isles their home, now, is spoken of as Tir-na-thonn, the Land of the Wave, or Tir-fo-Tuinn, the Land under the Sea.

But from a friend, an Islander of Iona, I have learned many things, and among them, that the Shee no longer dwell within the inland hills, and that though many of them inhabit the lonelier isles of the west, and in particular

The Seven Hunters, their Kingdom is in the North.

Some say it is among the pathless mountains of Iceland. But my friend spoke to an Iceland man, and he said he had never seen them. There were Secret People there, but not the Gaelic Sìdhe.

Their Kingdom is in the North, under the *Fir-Chlisneach*, the Dancing Men, as the Hebrideans call the polar aurora. They are always young there. Their bodies are white as the wild swan, their hair yellow as honey, their eyes blue as ice. Their feet leave no mark on the snow. The women are white as milk, with eyes like sloes, and lips like red rowans. They fight with shadows, and are glad; but the shadows are not shadows to them. The Shee slay great numbers at the full moon, but never hunt on moonless nights, or at the rising of the moon, or when the dew is falling. Their lances are made of reeds that glitter like shafts of ice, and it is ill for a mortal to find one of these lances, for it is tipped with the salt of a wave that no living thing has touched, neither the wailing mew nor the finned sgádan nor his tribe, nor the narwhal. There are no men of the human clans there, and no shores, and the tides are forbidden.

Long ago one of the monks of Columba sailed there. He sailed for thrice seven days till he lost the rocks of the north ; and for thrice thirty days, till Iceland in the south was like a small bluebell in a great grey plain ; and for thrice three years among bergs. For the first three years the finned things of the sea brought him food ; for the second three years he knew the kindness of the creatures of the air ; in the last three years angels fed him. He lived among the Sìdhe for three hundred years. When he came back to Iona, he was asked where he had been all that long night since evensong to matins. The monks had sought him everywhere, and at dawn had found him lying in the hollow of the long wave that washes Iona on the north. He laughed at that, and said he had been on the tops of the billows for nine years and three months and twenty-one days, and for three hundred years had lived among a deathless people. He had drunk sweet ale every day, and every day had known love among flowers and green bushes, and at dusk had sung old beautiful forgotten songs, and with star-flame had lit strange fires, and at the full of the moon had gone forth laughing to slay. It was heaven, there, under the Lights of the North. When he was asked how that people might

be known, he said that away from there they had a cold, cold hand, a cold, still voice, and cold ice-blue eyes. They had four cities at the four ends of the green diamond that is the world. That in the north was made of earth ; that in the east, of air ; that in the south, of fire ; that in the west, of water. In the middle of the green diamond that is the world is the Glen of Precious Stones. It is in the shape of a heart, and glows like a ruby, though all stones and gems are there. It is there the Sidhe go to refresh their deathless life.

The holy monks said that this kingdom was certainly Ifurin, the Gaelic Hell. So they put their comrade alive in a grave in the sand, and stamped the sand down upon his head, and sang hymns so that mayhap even yet his soul might be saved, or, at least, that when he went back to that place he might remember other songs than those sung by the milk-white women with eyes like sloes and lips red as rowans. "Tell that honey-mouthed cruel people they are in Hell," said the abbot, "and give them my ban and my curse unless they will cease laughing and loving sinfully and slaying with bright lances, and will come out of their secret places and be baptized."

They have not yet come.

This adventurer of the dreaming mind is another Oran, that fabulous Oran of whom the later Columban legends tell. I think that other Orans go out, even yet, to the Country of the Sìdhe. But few come again. It must be hard to find that glen at the heart of the green diamond that is the world; but, when found, harder to return by the way one came.

Once when I was sailing to Tiree, I stopped at Iona, and went to see an old woman named Giorsal. She was of my own people, and, not being Iona-born, the islanders called her the foreigner. She had a daughter named Ealàsaidh, or Elsie as it is generally given in English, and I wanted to see her even more than the old woman.

"Where is Elsie?" I asked, after our greetings were done.

Giorsal looked at me sidelong, and then shifted the kettle, and busied herself with the teapot.

I repeated the question.

"She is gone," the old woman said, without looking at me.

"Gone? Where has she gone to?"

"I might as well ask you to tell me that."

"Is she married . . . had she a lover . . .

or . . . or . . . do you mean that she . . . that you . . . have lost her?"

"She's gone. That's all I know. But she isn't married, so far as I know: an' I never knew any man she fancied: an' neither I nor any other on Iona has seen her dead body; an' by St. Martin's Cross, neither I nor any other saw her leave the island. And that was more than a year ago."

"But, Giorsal, she must have left Iona and gone to Mull, or maybe gone away in a steamer, or——"

"It was in midwinter, an' when a heavy gale was tearing through the Sound. There was no steamer an' no boat that day. There isn't a boat of Iona that could have taken the sea that day. And no—Elsie wasna drowned. I see that's what's in your mind. She just went out o' the house again cryin'. I asked her what was wrong wi' her. She turned an' smiled, an' because o' that terrifying smile I couldna say a word. She went up behind the Ruins, an' no one saw her after that but Ian Donn. He saw her among the bulrushes in the swamp over by Staonaig. She was laughing an' talking to the reeds, or to the wind in the reeds. So Ian Donn says."

"And what do *you* say, Giorsal?"

The old woman went to the door, looked

out, and closed it. When she returned, she put another bit on the fire, and kept her gaze on the red glow.

"Do you know much about them old Iona monks?" she asked abruptly.

"What old monks?"

"Them as they call the Culdees. You used to be askin' lots o' questions about them. Ay? well . . . they aye hated folk from the North, an' women-folk above all."

I waited, silent.

"And Elsie, poor lass, she hated them in turn. She was all for the wild clansmen out o' Skye and the Long Island. She said she wished the Siól Leoid had come to Iona before Colum built the big church. And for why? Well, there's this, for one thing: For months a monk had come to her o' nights in her sleep, an' said he would kill her, because she was a heathen. She went to the minister at last, an' said her say. He told her she was a foolish wench, an' was sore angry with her. So then she went to old Mary Gillespie, out by the lochan beyond Fionnaphort on the Ross yonder—her that has the sight an' a power o' the old wisdom. After that she took to meeting friends in the moonshine."

"Friends?"

"Ay. There's no call to name names. One day she told me that she had been bidden to go over to them. If she didn't, the monks would kill her, they said. The monks are still the strongest here, they told her, or she me, I forget which That is, except over by Staonaig. Up between Sgéur Iolaire and Cnoc Druidean there's a path that no monk can go. There, in the old days, they burned a woman. She was not a woman, but they thought she was. She was one o' the Sorrows of the Sheen, that they put out to suffer for them, an' get the mortal ill. That's the plague to *them*. It's ill to any that brings harm on *them*. That's why the monks arena strong over by Staonaig way. But I told my girl not to mind. She was safe wi' me, I said. She said that was true. For weeks I heard no more o' that monk. One night Elsie came in smiling an' pluckin' wild roses. "*Breisleach!*" I cried, "what's the meanin' o' roses in January?" She looked at me, frighted, an' said nothin', but threw the things on the fire. It was next day she went away."

"And——"

"An' that's all. Here's the tea. Ay, an' for sure here's my good man. *Whist*, now! Rob, do you see who's here?"

Nothing is more strange than the confused survival of legends and pagan faiths and early Christian beliefs, such as may be found still in some of the isles. A Tiree man, whom I met some time ago on the boat that was taking us both to the west, told me there's a story that Mary Magdalene lies in a cave in Iona. She roamed the world with a blind man who loved her, but they had no sin. One day they came to Knoidart in Argyll. Mary Magdalene's first husband had tracked her there, and she knew that he would kill the blind man. So she bade him lie down among some swine, and she herself herded them. But her husband came and laughed at her. "That is a fine boar you have there," he said. Then he put a spear through the blind man. "Now I will take your beautiful hair," he said. He did this and went away. She wept till she died. One of Colum's monks found her, and took her to Iona, and she was buried in a cave. No one but Colum knew who she was. Colum sent away the man, because he was always mooning and lamenting. She had a great wonderful beauty to her.

It is characteristic enough, even to the quaint confusion that could make Mary Magdalene and St. Columba contemporary. But as for the story, what is it but the universal Gaelic

legend of Diarmid and Grania? They too wandered far to escape the avenger. It does not matter that their "beds" are shown in rock and moor, from Glenmoriston to Loch Awe, from Lora Water to West Loch Tarbert, with an authenticity as absolute as that which discovers them almost anywhere between Donegal and Clare; nor that the death-place has many sites betwixt Argyll and Connemara. In Gaelic Scotland every one knows that Diarmid was wounded to the death on the rocky ground between Tarbert of Loch Fyne and the West Loch. Every one knows the part the boar played, and the part Finn played.

Doubtless the story came by way of the Shannon to the Loch of Shadows, or from Cuchullin's land to Dûn Sobhairce on the Antrim coast, and thence to the Scottish mainland. In wandering to the isles, it lost something both of Eiré and Alba. The Campbells, too, claimed Diarmid; and so the Hebrideans would as soon forget him. So, there, by one byplay of the mind or another, it survived in changing raiment. Perhaps an islesman had heard a strange legend about Mary Magdalene, and so named Grania anew. Perhaps a story-teller consciously wove it the new way. Perhaps an Iona man, hearing the tale in

distant Barra or Uist, in Coll or Tiree, "buried" Mary in a cave of Icolmkill.

The notable thing is, not that a primitive legend should love fantastic raiment, but that it should be so much alike, where the Syrian wanders from waste to waste, by the camp-fires of the Basque muleteers, and in the rainy lands of the Gael.

In Mingulay, one of the south isles of the Hebrides, in South Uist, and in Iona, I have heard a practically identical tale told with striking variations. It is a tale so widespread that it has given rise to a pathetic proverb, "Is mairg a loisgeadh a chlarsach dut," "Pity on him who would burn the harp for you."

In Mingulay, the "harper" who broke his "harp" for a woman's love was a young man, a fiddler. For three years he wandered out of the west into the east, and when he had made enough money to buy a good share in a fishing-boat, or even a boat itself, he came back to Mingulay. When he reached his Mary's cottage, at dusk, he played her favourite air, an "oran leannanachd," but when she came out it was with a silver ring on her left hand and a baby in her arms. Thus poor Padruig Macneill knew Mary had broken her troth and married another man, and so he went down

to the shore and played a "marbh-rann," and then broke his fiddle on the rocks; and when they came upon them in the morning he had the strings of it round his neck. In Uist, the instrument is more vaguely called a "tiompan," and here, on a bitter cold night in a famine time, the musician breaks it so as to feed the fire to warm his wife—a sacrifice ill repaid by the elopement of the hard woman that night. In Iona, the tale is of an Irish piper who came over to Icolmkill on a pilgrimage, and to lay his "peeb-h'yanna" [1] on "the holy stones"; but, when there, he got word that his young wife was ill, so he "made a loan of his clar," and with the money returned to Derry, only to find that his dear had gone away with a soldier for the Americas.

The legendary history of Iona would be as much Pagan as Christian. To-day, at many a *ceilidh* by the warm hearths in winter, one may hear allusions to the Scandinavian pirates, or to their more ancient and obscure kin, the Fomór. . . . The Fomór or Fomórians were a people that lived before the Gael, and had their habitations on the isles: fierce prowlers of the sea, who loved darkness and

[1] The Irish pipes are called "Piob-theannaich" to distinguish them from the "Piob" or "Piob-Mhòr" of the Highlands.

cold and storm, and drove herds of wolves across the deeps. In other words, they were elemental forces. But the name is sometimes used for the Norse pirates who ravaged the west, from the Lews to the town of the Hurdle-ford.

In poetic narration "the men of Lochlin" occurs oftener : sometimes the Summer-sailors, as the Vikings called themselves ; sometimes, perhaps oftenest, the Danes. The Vikings have left numerous personal names among the islanders, notably the general term "summer-sailors," *somerlédi*, which survives as Somerled. Many Macleods and Macdonalds are called Somerled, Torquil (also Torcall, Thorkill), and Mànus (Magnus), and in the Hebrides surnames such as Odrum betray a Norse origin. A glance at any good map will reveal how largely the capes and promontories and headlands, and small bays and havens of the west, remember the lords of the Suderöer.

The fascination of this legendary history is in its contrast of the barbaric and the spiritual. Since I was a child I have been held spellbound by this singular union. To see the Virgin Mary in the sombre and terrible figure of the Washer of the Ford, or spiritual destiny in that of the Woman with the Net, was

natural : as to believe that the same Columba could be as tender as St. Bride or gentle as St. Francis, and yet could thrust the living Oran back into his grave, or prophesy, as though himself a believer in the druidic wisdom, by the barking of a favourite hound that had a white spot on his forehead—*Donnalaich chon chinain.*

Of this characteristic blending of pagan and Christian thought and legend I have tried elsewhere to convey some sense—oftener, perhaps, have instinctively expressed : and here, as they are apposite to Iona, I would like to select some pages as representative of three phases—namely, of the barbaric history of Iona, of the primitive spiritual history which is so childlike in its simplicity, and of that direct grafting of Christian thought and imagery upon pagan thought and imagery which at one time, and doubtless for many generations (for it still survives), was a normal unconscious method. Some five years ago I wrote three short Columban stories, collectively called *The Three Marvels of Iona*, one named "The Festival of the Birds," another "The Sabbath of the Fishes and the Flies," and the third "The Moon-Child." It is the second of these that, somewhat altered

to its present use by running into it part of another Columban tale, I add now.

Before dawn, on the morning of the hundredth Sabbath after Colum the White had made glory to God in Hy, that was theretofore called Ioua, or the Druid Isle, and is now Iona, the saint beheld his own sleep in a vision.

Much fasting and long pondering over the missals, with their golden and azure and sea-green initials and earth-brown branching letters, had made Colum weary. He had brooded much of late upon the mystery of the living world that was not man's world.

On the eve of that hundredth Sabbath, which was to be a holy festival in Iona, he had talked long with an ancient greybeard out of a remote isle in the north, the wild Isle of the Mountains, where Scathach the queen hanged the men of Lochlin by their yellow hair.

This man's name was Ardan, and he was of the ancient people. He had come to Iona because of two things. Maolmòr, the king of the northern Picts, had sent him to learn of Colum what was this god-teaching he had brought out of Eiré: and for himself he had come when old age was upon him, to see what

manner of man this Colum was, who had made Ioua, that was "Innis-nan-Dhruidhnean"—the Isle of the Druids—into a place of new worship.

For three hours Ardan and Colum had walked by the sea-shore. Each learned of the other. Ardan bowed his head before the wisdom. Colum knew in his heart that the Druid saw mysteries.

In the first hour they talked of God.

"Ay, sure: and now," said the saint, "O Ardan the wise, is my God thy God?"

At that Ardan turned his eyes to the west. With his right hand he pointed to the sun that was like a great golden flower. "Truly, He is thy God and my God." Colum was silent. Then he said: "Thee and thine, O Ardan, from Maolmòr the Pictish king to the least of his slaves, shall have a long weariness in Hell. That fiery globe yonder is but the Lamp of the World: and sad is the case of the man who knows not the torch from the torch-bearer."

In the second hour they talked of Man. While Ardan spoke, Colum smiled in his deep, grey eyes.

"It is for laughter that," he said, when Ardan ceased.

"And why will that be, O Colum Cille?"

Ardan asked. Then the smile went out of Colum's grey eyes, and he turned and looked about him.

He saw near, a crow, a horse, and a hound.

"These are thy brethren," he said scornfully.

But Ardan answered quietly, "Even so."

The third hour they talked about the beasts of the earth and the fowls of the air.

At the last Ardan said: "The ancient wisdom hath it that these are the souls of men and women that have been, or are to be. Whereat Colum answered: "The new wisdom, that is old as eternity, declareth that God created all things in love, Therefore are we at one, O Ardan, though we sail to the Isle of Truth from the west and the east. Let there be peace between us." "Peace," said Ardan.

That eve, Ardan of the Picts sat with the monks of Iona.

Colum blessed him and said a saying. Cathal of the Songs sang a hymn of beauty. Ardan rose, and put the wine of guests to his lips, and chanted this rann:

O Colum and monks of Christ,
It is peace we are having this night:
Sure, peace is a good thing,
And I am glad with the gladness.

We worship one God,
Though ye call him Dia—
And I say not, O Dè!
But cry *Bea'uil Bêl!*

For it is one faith for man,
And one for the living world,
And no man is wiser than another—
And none knoweth much.

None knoweth a better thing than this:
The Sword, Love, Song, Honour, Sleep.
None knoweth a surer thing than this:
Birth, Sorrow, Pain, Weariness, Death.

Sure, peace is a good thing;
Let us be glad of peace:
We are not men of the Sword,
But of the Rune and the Wisdom.

I have learned a truth of Colum,
And he hath learned of me:
All ye on the morrow shall see
A wonder of the wonders.

Ardan would say no more after that, though all besought him. Many pondered long that night. Cathal made a song of mystery. Colum brooded through the dark; but before dawn he fell asleep upon the fern that strewed his cell. At dawn, with waking eyes, and weary, he saw his Sleep in a vision.

It stood grey and wan beside him.

"What art thou, O Spirit?" he said.

"I am thy Sleep, Colum."

"And is it peace?"

"It is peace."

"What wouldst thou?"

"I have wisdom. Thy mind and thy soul were closed. I could not give what I brought. I brought wisdom."

"Give it."

"Behold!"

And Colum, sitting upon the strewed fern that was his bed, rubbed his eyes that were heavy with weariness and fasting and long prayer. He could not see his Sleep now. It was gone as smoke that is licked up by the wind. . . .

For three days thereafter Colum fasted, save for a handful of meal at dawn, a piece of rye-bread at noon, and a mouthful of dulse and spring-water at sun-down. On the night of the third day, Oran and Keir came to him in his cell. Colum was on his knees lost in prayer. No sound was there, save the faint whispered muttering of his lips and on the plastered wall the weary buzzing of a fly.

"Holy One!" said Oran in a low voice, soft with pity and awe; "Holy One!"

But Colum took no notice. His lips still

moved, and the tangled hairs below his nether lip shivered with his failing breath.

"Father!" said Keir, tender as a woman; "Father!"

Colum did not turn his eyes from the wall. The fly droned his drowsy hum upon the rough plaster. It crawled wearily for a space, then stopped. The slow hot drone filled the cell.

"Father," said Oran, "it is the will of the brethren that thou shouldst break thy fast. Thou art old, and God has thy glory. Give us peace."

"Father," urged Keir, seeing that Colum kneeled unnoticingly, his lips still moving above his grey beard, with the white hair of him falling about his head like a snowdrift slipping from a boulder. "Father, be pitiful! We hunger and thirst for thy presence. We can fast no longer, yet we have no heart to break our fast if thou art not with us. Come, holy one, and be of our company, and eat of the good broiled fish that awaiteth us. We perish for the benediction of thine eyes."

Then it was that Colum rose, and walked slowly towards the wall.

"Little black beast," he said to the fly that droned its drowsy hum and moved not at all;

" little black beast, sure it is well I am knowing what you are. You are thinking you are going to get my blessing, you that have come out of hell for the soul of me !"

At that the fly flew heavily from the wall, and slowly circled round and round the head of Colum the White.

" What think ye of that, brother Oran, brother Keir ?" he asked in a low voice, hoarse because of his long fast and the weariness that was upon him.

" It is a fiend," said Oran.

" It is an angel," said Keir.

Thereupon the fly settled upon the wall again, and again droned his drowsy hot hum.

" Little black beast," said Colum, with the frown coming down into his eyes, " is it for peace you are here, or for sin ? Answer, I conjure you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost !"

"*An ainn an Athar, 's an Mhic, 's an Spioraid Naoimh,*" repeated Oran below his breath.

"*An ainn an Athar, 's an Mhic, 's an Spioraid Naoimh,*" repeated Keir below his breath.

Then the fly that was upon the wall flew up to the roof and circled to and fro. And it sang a beautiful song, and its song was this :

Praise be to God, and a blessing too at that, and a blessing!
For Colum the White, Colum the Dove, hath worshipped;
Yea, he hath worshipped and made of a desert a garden,
And out of the dung of men's souls hath made a sweet savour of burning.

A savour of burning, most sweet, a fire for the altar,
This he hath made in the desert; the hell-saved all gladden.
Sure he hath put his benison, too, on milch-cow and bullock,
On the fowls of the air, and the man-eyed seals, and the otter.

But high in His Dûn in the great blue mainland of heaven,
God the All-Father broodeth, where the harpers are harping His glory:
There where He sitteth, where a river of ale poureth ever,
His great sword broken, His spear in the dust, He broodeth.

And this is the thought that moves in his brain, as a cloud filled with thunder
Moves through the vast hollow sky filled with the dust of the stars—
"What boots it the glory of Colum, when he maketh a Sabbath to bless me,
And hath no thought of my sons in the deeps of the air and the sea?"

And with that the fly passed from their vision. In the cell was a most wondrous sweet song, like the sound of far-off pipes over water.

Oran said in a low voice of awe, "O God, our God!"

Keir whispered, white with fear, "O God, my God!"

But Colum rose, and took a scourge from where it hung on the wall. "It shall be for peace, Oran," he said, with a grim smile flitting like a bird above the nest of his grey beard; "it shall be for peace, Keir!"

And with that he laid the scourge heavily upon the bent backs of Keir and Oran, nor stayed his hand, nor let his three days' fast weaken the deep piety that was in the might of his arm, and because of the glory of God.

Then, when he was weary, peace came into his heart, and he sighed "*Amen!*"

"Amen!" said Oran the monk.

"Amen!" said Keir the monk.

"And this thing has been done," said Colum, "because of your evil wish and the brethren, that I should break my fast, and eat of fish, till God will it. And lo, I have learned a mystery. Ye shall all witness to it on the morrow, which is the Sabbath."

That night the monks wondered much. Only Oran and Keir cursed the fishes in the deeps of the sea and the flies in the deeps of the air.

On the morrow, when the sun was yellow on the brown seaweed, and there was peace on the isle and upon the waters, Colum and the brotherhood went slowly towards the sea.

At the meadows that are close to the sea, the saint stood still. All bowed their heads.

"O winged things of the air," cried Colum, "draw near!"

With that the air was full of the hum of innumerous flies, midges, bees, wasps, moths, and all winged insects. These settled upon the monks, who moved not, but praised God in silence.

"Glory and praise to God," cried Colum, "behold the Sabbath of the children of God that inhabit the deeps of the air! Blessing and peace be upon them."

"Peace! Peace!" cried the monks, with one voice.

"In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost!" cried Colum the White, glad because of the glory to God.

"*An ainn an Athar, 's an Mhic, 's an Spio-*

*raid Naoimh*," cried the monks, bowing reverently, and Oran and Keir deepest of all, because they saw the fly that was of Colum's cell leading the whole host, as though it were its captain, and singing to them a marvellous sweet song.

Oran and Keir testified to this thing, and all were full of awe and wonder, and Colum praised God.

Then the saints and the brotherhood moved onward and went upon the rocks. When all stood ankle-deep in the seaweed that was swaying in the tide, Colum cried:

"O finny creatures of the deep, draw near!"

And with that the whole sea shimmered as with silver and gold. All the fishes of the sea, and the great eels, and the lobsters and the crabs, came in a swift and terrible procession. Great was the glory.

Then Colum cried, "O fishes of the deep, who is your king?" Whereupon the herring, the mackerel, and the dogfish swam forward, and each claimed to be king. But the echo that ran from wave to wave said, *The Herring is King!*

Then Colum said to the mackerel, "Sing the song that is upon you."

And the mackerel sang the song of the

wild rovers of the sea, and the lust of pleasure.

Then Colum said, "But for God's mercy, I would curse you, O false fish."

Then he spoke likewise to the dogfish, and the dogfish sang of slaughter and the chase, and the joy of blood.

And Colum said, "Hell shall be your portion."

Then there was peace. And the herring said :

"In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

Whereat all that mighty multitude, before they sank into the deep, waved their fins and their claws, each after its kind, and repeated as with one voice :

"*An ainn an Athar, 's an Mhic, 's an Spioraid Naoimh !*"

And the glory that was upon the Sound of Iona was as though God trailed a starry net upon the waters, with a shining star in every little hollow, and a flowing moon of gold on every wave.

Then Colum the White put out both his arms, and blessed the children of God that are in the deeps of the sea and that are in the deeps of the air.

That is how Sabbath came upon all living

things upon Ioua that is called Iona, and within the air above Ioua, and within the sea that is around Ioua.

And the glory is Colum's.

To illustrate the history of the island I select the following episode from *Barbaric Tales*. It deals with The Flight of the Culdees. The name culdee is somewhat loosely used both by mediæval and modern writers, for it does not appear to have been given to the Brotherhood of the Columban Church till two hundred years after Columba's death. The word may be taken to mean the Cleric of God; perhaps, later, it was the equivalent of anchorite. This episode is, in date, about A.D. 800 or soon after.

On the wane of the moon, on the day following the ruin of Bail'-tiorail, sails were seen far east of Stromness.

Olaus the White called his men together. The boats coming before the wind were doubtless his own galleys which he had lost when the south-gale had blown them against Skye; but no man can know when and how the gods may smile grimly, and let the swords that whirl be broken, or the spears that are flat become a hedge of death.

An hour later, a startled word went from viking to viking. The galleys in the offing were the fleet of Sweno the Hammerer. Why had he come so far southward, and why were oars so swift and the stained sails distended before the wind? They were soon to know.

Sweno himself was the first to land. A great man he was, broad and burly, with a sword-slash across his face that brought his brows in a perpetual frown above his savage blood-shot eyes.

In few words he told how he had met a galley, with only half its crew, and of these many who were wounded. It was the last of the fleet of Haco the Laugher. A fleet of fifteen war-birlinns had set out from the Long Island, and had given battle. Haco had gone into the strife, laughing loud as was his wont, and he and all his men had the berserk rage, and fought with joy and foam at the mouth. Never had the Sword sung a sweeter song.

"Well," said Olaus the White grimly, "well, how did the Raven fly?"

"When Haco laughed for the last time, his sword waving out of the death-tide where he sank, there was only one galley left. No more than nine vikings lived thereafter to tell the tale. These nine we took out of their boat, which was below waves soon. Haco and

his men are all fighting the sea-shadows by now."

A loud snarling went from man to man. This became a cry of rage. Then savage shouts filled the air. Swords were lifted up against the sky; and the fierce glitter of blue eyes and the bristling of tawny beards were fair to see, thought the captive women, though their hearts beat in their breasts like eaglets behind the bars of a cage.

Sweno the Hammerer frowned a deep frown when he heard that Olaus was there with only the *Svart-Alf* out of the galleys which had gone the southward way.

"If the islanders come upon us now with their birlinns we shall have to make a running fight," he said.

Olaus laughed.

"Ay, but the running shall be after the birlinns, Sweno."

"I hear there are fifty and nine men of these Culdees yonder under the sword-priest, Maoliosa?"

"It is a true word. But to-night, after the moon is up, there shall be none."

At that, all who heard laughed, and were less heavy in their hearts because of the slaying and drowning of Haco the Laugher and all his crew.

"Where is the woman Brenda that you took?" Olaus asked, as he stared at Sweno's boat and saw no woman there.

"She is in the sea."

Olaus the White looked. It was his eyes that asked.

"I flung her into the sea because she laughed when she heard of how the birlinns that were under Somhairle the Renegade drove in upon our ships, and how Haco laughed no more, and the sea was red with viking blood."

"She was a woman, Sweno—and none more fair in the isles, after Morna that is mine."

"Woman or no woman, I flung her into the sea. The Gael call us Gall: then I will let no Gael laugh at the Gall. It is enough. She is drowned. There are always women: one here, one there—it is but a wave blown this way or that."

At this moment a viking came running across the ruined town with tidings. Maoliosa and his culdees were crowding into a great birlinn. Perhaps they were coming to give battle: perhaps they were for sailing away from that place.

Olaus and Sweno stared across the fjord. At first they knew not what to do. If Maoliosa

thought of battle he would hardly choose that hour and place. Or was it that he knew the Gael were coming in force, and that the vikings were caught in a trap?

At last it was clear. Sweno gave a great laugh.

"By the blood of Odin," he cried, "they come to sue for peace!"

Filled with white-robed culdees, the birlinn drew slowly across the loch. A tall, old man stood at the prow, with streaming hair and beard, white as sea-foam. In his right hand he grasped a great Cross, whereon Christ was crucified.

The vikings drew close to one another.

"Hail them in their own tongue, Sweno," said Olaus.

The Hammerer moved to the water-edge, as the birlinn stopped, a short arrow-flight away.

"Ho, there, priests of the Christ-faith!"

"What would you, viking?" It was Maoliosa himself that spoke.

"Why do you come here among us, you that are Maoliosa?"

"To win you and yours to God, Pagan."

"Is it madness that is upon you, old man? We have swords and spears here, if we lack hymns and prayers."

All this time Olaus kept a wary watch inland and seaward, for he feared that Maoliosa came because of an ambush.

Truly the old monk was mad. He had told his culdees that God would prevail, and that the pagans would melt away before the Cross. The ebb-tide was running swift. Even while Sweno spoke, the birlinn touched a low sea-hidden ledge of rock. A cry of consternation went up from the white-robes. Loud laughter came from the vikings.

"Arrows!" cried Olaus.

With that threescore men took their bows. A hail of death-shafts fell. Many pierced the water, but some pierced the necks and hearts of the culdees.

Maoliosa himself, stood in death transfixed to the mast. With a scream the monks swept their oars backward. Then they leaped to their feet, and changed their place, and rowed for life.

The summer-sailors sprang into their galley. Sweno the Hammerer was at the bow. The foam curled and hissed. The birlinn of the culdees grided upon the opposite shore at the moment when Sweno brought down his battle-axe upon the monk who steered. The man was cleft to the shoulder. Sweno swayed with the blow, stumbled, and fell headlong

into the sea. A culdee thrust at him with an oar, and pinned him among the sea-tangle. Thus died Sweno the Hammerer.

Like a flock of sheep the white-robes leaped upon the shore. Yet Olaus was quicker than they. With a score of vikings he raced to the Church of the Cells, and gained the sanctuary. The monks uttered a cry of despair, and, turning, fled across the sands. Olaus counted them. There were now forty in all.

"Let forty men follow," he cried.

The monks fled this way and that. Olaus, and those who watched, laughed to see how they stumbled, because of their robes. One by one fell, sword-cleft or spear-thrust. The sand-dunes were red.

Soon there were fewer than a score—then twelve only—ten!

"Bring them back!" Olaus shouted.

When the ten fugitives were captured and brought back, Olaus took the crucifix that Maoliosa had raised, and held it before each in turn.

"Smite!" he said to the first monk. But the man would not.

"Smite!" he said to the second; but he would not. And so it was to the tenth.

"Good!" said Olaus the While; "they shall witness to their God."

With that he bade his vikings break up the birlinn, and drive the planks into the ground and shore them up with logs. When this was done he crucified each culdee. With nails and with ropes he did unto each what their God had suffered. Then all were left there by the water-side.

That night, when Olaus the White and the laughing Morna left the great bonfire where the vikings sang and drank horn after horn of strong ale, they stood and looked across the strait. In the moonlight, upon the dim verge of the island shore, they could see ten crosses. On each was a motionless white splatch.

Once more, for an instance of the grafting of Christian thought and imagery on pagan thought and imagery, I take a few pages of the introductory part to the story of "The Woman with the Net," in a later volume.[1] They tell of a young monk who, inspired by Colum's holy example, went out of Iona as a missionary to the Pictish heathen of the north.

When Artân had kissed the brow of every white-robed brother on Iona, and had been

[1] *The Dominion of Dreams*, 1st Ed.

thrice kissed by the aged Colum, his heart was filled with gladness.

It was late summer, and in the afternoon-light peace lay on the green waters of the Sound, on the green grass of the dunes, on the domed wicker-woven cells of the culdees over whom the holy Colum ruled, and on the little rock-strewn hill which rose above where stood Colum's wattled church of sun-baked mud. The abbot walked slowly by the side of the young man. Colum was tall, with hair long and heavy but white as the canna, and with a beard that hung low on his breast, grey as the moss on old firs. His blue eyes were tender. The youth—for though he was a grown man he seemed a youth beside Colum—had beauty. He was tall and comely, with yellow curling hair, and dark-blue eyes, and a skin so white that it troubled some of the monks who dreamed old dreams and washed them away in tears and scourgings.

"You have the bitter fever of youth upon you, Artân," said Colum, as they crossed the dunes beyond Dûn-I; "but you have no fear, and you will be a flame among these Pictish idolaters, and you will be a lamp to show them the way."

"And when I come again, there will be

clappings of hands, and hymns, and many rejoicings?"

"I do not think you will come again," said Colum. "The wild people of these north-lands will burn you, or crucify you, or put you upon the crahslat, or give you thirst and hunger till you die. It will be a great joy for you to die like that, Artân, my son?"

"Ay, a great joy," answered the young monk, but with his eyes dreaming away from his words.

Silence was between them as they neared the cove where a large coracle lay, with three men in it.

"Will God be coming to Iona when I am away?" asked Artân.

Colum stared at him.

"Is it likely that God would come here in a coracle?" he asked, with scornful eyes.

The young man looked abashed. For sure, God would not come in a coracle, just as he himself might come. He knew by that how Colum had reproved him. He would come in a cloud of fire, and would be seen from far and near. Artân wondered if the place he was going to was too far north for him to see that greatness; but he feared to ask.

"Give me a new name," he asked; "give me a new name, my father."

"What name will you have?"

"Servant of Mary."

"So be it, Artân Gille-Mhoire."

With that Colum kissed him and bade farewell, and Artân sat down in the coracle, and covered his head with his mantle, and wept and prayed.

The last word he heard was, *Peace!*

"That is a good word, and a good thing," he said to himself; "and because I am the Servant of Mary, and the Brother of Jesu the Son, I will take peace to the *Cruitnè*, who know nothing of that blessing of the blessings."

When he unfolded his mantle, he saw that the coracle was already far from Iona. The south wind blew, and the tides swept northward, and the boat moved swiftly across the water. The sea was ashine with froth and small waves leaping like lambs.

In the boat were Thorkeld, a helot of Iona, and two dark wild-eyed men of the north. They were Picts, but could speak the tongue of the Gael. Myrdu, the Pictish king of Skye, had sent them to Iona, to bring back from Colum a culdee who could show wonders.

"And tell the chief Druid of the Godmen," Myrdu had said, "that if his culdee does not show me good wonders, and so make me believe in his two gods and the woman, I will put an ash-shaft through his body from the hips and out at his mouth, and send him back on the north tide to the Isle of the White-Robes." The sun was already among the outer isles when the coracle passed near the Isle of Columns. A great noise was in the air : the noise of the waves in the caverns, and the noise of the tide, like sea-wolves growling, and like bulls bellowing in a narrow pass of the hills.

A sudden current caught the boat, and it began to drift towards great reefs white with ceaseless torn streams.

Thorkeld leaned from the helm, and shouted to the two Picts. They did not stir, but sat staring, idle with fear.

Artân knew now that it was as Colum had said. God would give him glory soon.

So he took the little clarsach he had for hymns, for he was the best harper on Iona, and struck the strings, and sang. But the Latin words tangled in his throat, and he knew too that the men in the boat would not understand what he sang ; also that the older gods still came far south, and in the caves of

the Isle of Columns were demons. There was only one tongue common to all; and since God has wisdom beyond that of Colum himself, He would know the song in Gaelic as well as though sung in Latin.

So Artân let the wind take his broken hymn, and he made a song of his own, and sang:

O Heavenly Mary, Queen of the Elements,
And you, Brigit the fair with the little harp,
And all the saints, and all the old gods
(And it is not one of them I'd be disowning),
Speak to the Father, that he may save us from drowning.

Then seeing that the boat drifted closer, he sang again:

Save us from the rocks and the sea, Queen of Heaven!
And remember that I am a Culdee of Iona,
And that Colum has sent me to the *Cruitnè*
To sing them the song of peace lest they be damned for ever!

Thorkeld laughed at that.

"Can the woman put swimming upon you?" he said roughly. "I would rather have the good fin of a great fish now than any woman in the skies."

"You will burn in hell for that," said Artân, the holy zeal warm at his heart.

But Thorkeld answered nothing. His hand was on the helm, his eyes on the foaming rocks. Besides, what had he to do with the culdee's hell or heaven? When he died, he, who was a man of Lochlann, would go to his own place.

One of the dark men stood, holding the mast. His eyes shone. Thick words swung from his lips like seaweed thrown out of a hollow by an ebbing wave.

The coracle swerved, and the four men were wet with the heavy spray

Thorkeld put his oar in the water, and the swaying craft righted,

"Glory to God," said Artân.

"There is no glory to your god in this," said Thorkeld scornfully. "Did you not hear what Necta sang? He sang to the woman in there that drags men into the caves, and throws their bones on the next tide. He put an incantation upon her, and she shrank, and the boat slid away from the rocks."

"That is a true thing," thought Artân. He wondered if it was because he had not sung his hymn in the holy Latin.

When the last flame died out of the west, and the stars came like sheep gathering at the

call of the shepherd, Artân remembered that he had not said his prayers and sang the vesper hymn.

He lay back and listened. There were no bells calling across the water. He looked into the depths. It was Manann's kingdom, and he had never heard that God was there; but he looked. Then he stared into the dark-blue star-strewn sky.

Suddenly he touched Thorkeld.

"Tell me," he said, "how far north has the Cross of Christ come?"

"By the sea way it has not come here yet. Murdoch the Freckled came with it this way, but he was pulled into the sea, and he died."

"Who pulled him into the sea?"

Thorkeld stared into the running wave. He had no words.

Artân lay still for a long while.

"It will go ill with me," he thought, "if Mary cannot see me so far away from Iona, and if God will not listen to me. Colum should have known that, and given me a holy leaf with the fair branching letters on it, and the Latin words that are the words of God."

Then he spoke to the man who had sung.

"Do you know of Mary, and God, and the Son, and the Spirit?"

"You have too many Gods, Culdee," an-

swered the Pict sullenly: "for of these one is your god's son, and the other is the woman his mother, and the third is the ghost of an ancestor."

Artân frowned.

"The curse of the God of Peace upon you for that," he said angrily; "do you know that you have hell for your dwelling-place if you speak evil of God the Father, and the Son, and the Mother of God?"

"How long have they been in Iona, White-Robe?"

The man spoke scornfully. Artân knew they had not been there many years. He had no words.

"My father worshipped the Sun on the Holy Isle before ever your great Druid that is called Colum crossed the Moyle. Were your three gods in the coracle with Colum? They were not on the Holy Isle when he came."

"They were coming there," answered Artân confusedly. "It is a long, long way from—from—from the place they were sailing from."

Necta listened sullenly.

"Let them stay on Iona," he said: "gods though they be, it would fare ill with them if they came upon the Woman with the Net." Then he turned on his side, and lay by the

man Darach, who was staring at the moon and muttering words that neither Artân nor Thorkeld knew.

A white calm fell. The boat lay like a leaf on a silent pool. There was nothing between that dim wilderness and the vast sweeping blackness filled with quivering stars, but the coracle, that a wave could crush.

At times, I doubt not, there must have been weaker brethren among these simple and devoted Culdees of Iona, though in Colum's own day there was probably none (unless it were Oran) who was not the visible outward shrine of a pure flame.

Thinking of such an one, and not without furtive pagan sympathy, I wrote the other day these lines, which I may also add here as a further side-light upon that half-Pagan, half-Christian basis upon which the Columban Church of Iona stood.

Balva the old monk I am called: when I was young,
Balva Honeymouth.
That was before Colum the White came to Iona in
the West.
She whom I loved was a woman whom I won out of
the South.
And I had a good heaven with my lips on hers and
with breast to breast.

Balva the old monk I am called: were it not for the fear
That the soul of Colum the White would meet my soul in the Narrows
That sever the living and dead, I would rise up from here,
And go back to where men pray with spears and arrows.

Balva the old monk I am called: ugh! ugh! the cold bell of the matins—'tis dawn!
Sure it's a dream I have had that I was in a warm wood with the sun ashine,
And that against me in the pleasant greenness was a soft fawn,
And a voice that whispered "Balva Honeymouth, drink, I am thy wine!"

As I write,[1] here on the hill-slope of Dûn-I, the sound of the furtive wave is as the sighing in a shell. I am alone between sea and sky, for there is no other on this bouldered height, nothing visible but a single blue shadow that slowly sails the hillside. The bleating of lambs and ewes, the lowing of kine, these come up from the Machar that lies between the west slopes and the shoreless sea to the west; these ascend as the very smoke of sound. All round the island there is a continuous breathing; deeper and more

[1] See Notes, p. 429.

prolonged on the west, where the open sea is; but audible everywhere. The seals on Soa are even now putting their breasts against the running tide; for I see a flashing of fins here and there in patches at the north end of the Sound, and already from the ruddy granite shores of the Ross there is a congregation of seafowl—gannets and guillemots, skuas and herring-gulls, the long-necked northern diver, the tern, the cormorant. In the sunblaze, the waters of the Sound dance their blue bodies and swirl their flashing white hair o' foam; and, as I look, they seem to me like children of the wind and the sunshine, leaping and running in these flowing pastures, with a laughter as sweet against the ears as the voices of children at play.

The joy of life vibrates everywhere. Yet the Weaver does not sleep, but only dreams. He loves the sun-drowned shadows. They are invisible thus, but they are there, in the sunlight itself. Sure, they may be heard: as, an hour ago, when on my way hither by the Stairway of the Kings—for so sometimes they call here the ancient stones of the mouldered princes of long ago—I heard a mother moaning because of the son that had had to go over-sea and leave her in her old age; and heard also a child sobbing, because

of the sorrow of childhood—that sorrow so unfathomable, so incommunicable. And yet not a stone's-throw from where I lie, half hidden beneath an overhanging rock, is the Pool of Healing. To this small, black-brown tarn, pilgrims of every generation, for hundreds of years, have come. Solitary, these; not only because the pilgrim to the Fount of Eternal Youth must fare hither alone, and at dawn, so as to touch the healing water the moment the first sunray quickens it—but solitary, also, because those who go in quest of this Fount of Youth are the dreamers and the Children of Dream, and these are not many, and few come now to this lonely place. Yet, an Isle of Dream Iona is, indeed. Here the last sun-worshippers bowed before the Rising of God; here Columba and his hymning priests laboured and brooded; and here Oran or his kin dreamed beneath the monkish cowl that pagan dream of his. Here, too, the eyes of Fionn and Oisìn, and of many another of the heroic men and women of the Fiànna, may have lingered; here the Pict and the Celt bowed beneath the yoke of the Norse pirate, who, too, left his dreams, or rather his strangely beautiful soul-rainbows, as a heritage to the stricken; here, for century after century, the Gael has lived, suffered, joyed,

dreamed his impossible, beautiful dream ; as here, now, he still lives, still suffers patiently, still dreams, and through all and over all, broods upon the incalculable mysteries. He is an elemental, among the elemental forces. He knows the voices of wind and sea : and it is because the Fount of Youth upon Dûn-I of Iona is not the only wellspring of peace, that the Gael can front destiny as he does, and can endure. Who knows where its tributaries are? They may be in your heart, or in mine, and in a myriad others.

I would that the birds of Angus Òg might, for once, be changed, not, as fabled, into the kisses of love, but into doves of peace, that they might fly into the green world, and nest there in many hearts, in many minds, crooning their incommunicable song of joy and hope.

A doomed and passing race. I have been taken to task for these words. But they are true, in the deep reality where they obtain. Yes, but true only in one sense, however vital that is. The Breton's eyes are slowly turning from the enchanted West, and slowly his ears are forgetting the whisper of the wind around menhir and dolmen. The Manxman has ever been the mere yeoman of the Celtic

chivalry; but even his rude dialect perishes year by year. In Wales, a great tradition survives; in Ireland, a supreme tradition fades through sunset-hued horizons; in Celtic Scotland, a passionate regret, a despairing love and longing, narrows yearly before a dull and incredibly selfish alienism. The Celt has at last reached his horizon. There is no shore beyond. He knows it. This has been the burden of his song since Malvina led the blind Oisìn to his grave by the sea: "Even the Children of Light must go down into darkness." But this apparition of a passing race is no more than the fulfilment of a glorious resurrection before our very eyes. For the genius of the Celtic race stands out now with averted torch, and the light of it is a glory before the eyes, and the flame of it is blown into the hearts of the stronger people. The Celt fades, but his spirit rises in the heart and the mind of the Anglo-Celtic peoples, with whom are the destinies of generations to come.

I stop, and look seaward from this hillslope of Dûn-I. Yes, even in this Isle of Joy, as it seems in this dazzle of golden light and splashing wave, there is the like mortal gloom and immortal mystery which moved the minds of the old seers and bards. Yonder, where

that thin spray quivers against the thyme-set cliff, is the Spouting Cave, where to this day the Mar-Tarbh, dread creature of the sea, swims at the full of the tide. Beyond, out of sight behind these craggy steeps, is Port-na-Churaich, where, a thousand years ago, Columba landed in his coracle. Here, eastward, is the landing-place, for the dead of old, brought hence out of Christendom for sacred burial in the Isle of the Saints. All the story of the Gael is here. Iona is the microcosm of the Gaelic world.

Last night, about the hour of the sun's going, I lay upon the heights near the Cave, overlooking the Machar—the sandy, rock-frontiered plain of duneland on the west side of Iona, exposed to the Atlantic. There was neither bird nor beast, no living thing to see, save one solitary human creature. The man toiled at kelp-burning. I watched the smoke till it merged into the sea-mist that came creeping swiftly out of the north, and down from Dûn-I eastward. At last nothing was visible. The mist shrouded everything. I could hear the dull, rhythmic beat of the waves. That was all. No sound, nothing visible.

It was, or seemed, a long while before a rapid thud-thud trampled the heavy air.

Then I heard the rush, the stamping and neighing, of some young mares, pasturing there, as they raced to and fro, bewildered or perchance in play. A glimpse I caught of three, with flying manes and tails; the others were blurred shadows only. A swirl, and the mist disclosed them; a swirl, and the mist enfolded them again. Then, silence once more.

Abruptly, though not for a long time thereafter, the mist rose and drifted seaward.

All was as before. The kelp-burner still stood, straking the smouldering seaweed. Above him a column ascended, bluely spiral, dusked with shadow.

The kelp-burner: who was he but the Gael of the Isles? Who but the Gael in his old-world sorrow? The mist falls and the mist rises. He is there all the same, behind it, part of it; and the column of smoke is the incense out of his longing heart that desires Heaven and Earth, and is dowered only with poverty and pain, hunger and weariness, a little isle of the seas, a great hope, and the love of love.

But . . . to the island-story once more!

Some day, surely, the historian of Iona will appear.

How many "history-books" there are like dead leaves. The simile is a travesty. There is no little russet leaf of the forest that could not carry more real, more intimate knowledge. There is no leaf that could not reveal mystery of form, mystery of colour, wonder of structure, secret of growth, the law of harmony; that could not testify to birth, and change, and decay, and death; and what history tells us more?—that could not, to the inward ear, bring the sound of the south wind making a greenness in the woods of Spring, the west wind calling his brown and red flocks to the fold.

What a book it will be! It will reveal to us the secret of what Oisìn sang, what Merlin knew, what Columba dreamed, what Adamnan hoped: what this little "lamp of Christ" was to pagan Europe; what incense of testimony it flung upon the winds; what saints and heroes went out of it; how the dust of kings and princes were brought there to mingle with its sands; how the noble and the ignoble came to it across long seas and perilous countries. It will tell, too, how the Danes ravaged the isles of the west, and left not only their seed for the strengthening of an older race, but imageries and words, words and imageries so alive to-day that the listener in

the mind may hear the cries of the viking above the voice of the Gael and the more ancient tongue of the Pict. It will tell, too, how the nettle came to shed her snow above kings' heads, and the thistle to wave where bishops' mitres stood; how a simple people out of the hills and moors, remembering ancient wisdom or blindly cherishing forgotten symbols, sought here the fount of youth; and how, slowly, a long sleep fell upon the island, and only the grasses shaken in the wind, and the wind itself, and the broken shadows of dreams in the minds of the old, held the secret of Iona. And, at the last—with what lift, with what joy—it will tell how once more the doves of hope and peace have passed over its white sands, this little holy land! This little holy land! Ah, white doves, come again! A thousand thousand wait.

# BY SUNDOWN SHORES

*"Cette âme qui se lamente*
*En cette plaine dormante*
*C'est la nôtre n'est-ce pas ?*
*La mienne, dis, et la tienne,*
*Dont s'exhale l'humble antienne*
*Par ce tiède soir, tout, bas ?"*

# By Sundown Shores

*"'N hano ann Tad, ar Mab hac ar Spered-Zantel,*
*Homan' zo'r ganaouenn zavet en Breiz-Izel!*
*Zavet gant eur paour-kèz, en Ar-goat, en Ar-vor,*
*Kanet anez-hi, pewienn, hac ho pezo digor."*

"In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
This song of mine was raised in my Breton Fatherland,
In Argoat forest-clad, in Arvor of the grey wave:
Sing it, wayfarers, and all gates will open before you."

I do not know the name of the obscure minstrel who sang this song, as he passed from village to village, by the coasts, along the heath-lands of Brittany. But there are poets who have no name and no country, because they are named by the secret name of the longing of many minds, and mysteriously come from and pass to the Land of Heart's Desire, which is their own land. This wandering Breton minstrel is of that company. His *sône* is familiar. I have heard it where Connemara breaks in grey rock and sudden pastures to the sea: where only the wind and

the heather people the solitudes of Argyll: where the silent Isles shelve to perpetual foam. He speaks for all his brotherhood of Armorica: he speaks also for the greater brotherhood of his race, the broken peoples who now stand upon the sundown shores, from wild Ushant to the cliffs of Achil, from St. Bride's Bay to solitary St. Kilda. He is not only the genius of Arvor, daughter of dreams, but the genius of a race whose farewell is in a tragic lighting of torches of beauty around its grave. For it is the soul of the Celt who wanders homeless to-day, with his pathetic burthen that his *sône* was made by ancestral woods, by the unchanging sea; dreaming the enchanted air will open all doors. Alas! few doors open: the wayfarer must not tarry. Memories and echoes he may leave, but he must turn his face. Grey dolmen and grey menhir already stand there, by the last shores, memorials of his destiny.

The ancient Gaels believed that in the western ocean there was an island called Hy Bràsil, where all that was beautiful and mysterious lived beyond the pillars of the rainbow. The legendary romances of the Celtic races may be described as the Hy Bràsil of literature.

In the Celtic commune there are many legendary tales which, but for the accident of names and local circumstances, are identical. The familiar Highland legend of the children who, bathing in a mountain loch, were carried off by a water-horse, has its counterpart in Connemara, in Merioneth, and in Finistère, though in the Welsh recital the children are the victims of a dragon, and in the Breton legend the monster is a boar. For that matter, this elemental tale has its roots in the east, and Macedonia and the Himalaya retain the memory of what Aryan wagoners told by the camp-fires during their centuries-long immigration into Europe. Whether, however, a tale be universal or strictly Celtic, generally it has a parallel in one or all of the racial dialects. True, there are legendary cycles which are local. The Arzur of Brittany is a mere echo in the Hebrides, and the name of Cuculain or the fame of the Red Branch has not reached the dunes of Armorica. Nevertheless, even in the mythopoeic tales there is a kindred character. Nomënoë may have been a Breton Fionn, though he had no Oìsin to wed his deeds to a deathless music; and Diarmid and Grainne have loved beneath the oaks of Broceliande or the beech-groves of Llanidris, as well as among the hills of

Erin, or in the rocky fastnesses of Morven. It is characteristic, too, how Celtland has given to Celtland. Scotland gave Ireland St. Patrick; Ireland gave Scotland St. Columba; the chief bard of Armorica came from Wales; and Cornwall has the Arthurian fame which is the meed of Kymric Caledonia. To this day no man can say whether Oìsin, old and blind, wandered at the last to Drumadoon in Arran, or if indeed he followed out of Erin the sweet voice from Tirnan-Òg, and was seen or heard of by none, till three centuries later the bells of the clerics and the admonitions of Patrick made his days a burden not to be borne. Did not the greatest of Irish kings die in tributary lands by the banks of the Loire, and who has seen the moss of that lost grave in Broceliande where Merlin of the North lay down to a long sleep?

Even where there seems no probability of a common origin, there is often a striking similarity in the matter and the manner of folk-tales, particularly those which narrate the strange experiences of the saints. Thus, for example, in one of the most beautiful of the legendary stories given in *The Shadow of Arvor*[1] there is an account of how Gradlon,

[1] *Vide* Notes, p. 431.

"the honoured chief of Kerne, the monarch who built Ys, and on whose brow were united the crowns of Armorica," having voluntarily become a wandering beggar, arrived at last in the heart of an ancient forest: "towering moss-clad pillars bearing a heavy roof of foliage, full of the mystery of a cathedral aisle by night." Here the king vowed to build a great temple, but before he could fulfil his vow he died. Gwennole the monk had missed Gradlon, and had followed him to the forest, to find him there on the morrow, lying on a bed of moss which the fallen leaves had flecked with gold. Near him crouched a human figure. This was Primel the anchorite. Note how the king speaks to the Christian monk Gwennole concerning this ancient hermit. "Have mercy on this poor old man beside me: the length of three men's lives has been his, and he has known the deeps of sorrow. The sorrows which have come upon me are nothing to his; for while I have wept over the fate of my royal city, and while for Ahez my heart has been broken, this man has lost his gods. There is no sorrow that is so great a sorrow. He is a Druid lamenting a dead faith. Show him tenderness." Therewith Gradlon dies. Over the dead king "Gwennole murmured a Latin

chant; the druid in a tremulous voice intoned a refrain in an unknown tongue; and Gradlon, ruler of the sea, slept in that glade watched over by the priest of Christ and by the last surviving servant of Teutates. . . . There, amid the majestic solitudes of the forest, the two religions of the ancient race joined hands and were at one before the mystery of death." Later, the druid bids Gwennole build a Christian sanctuary on the spot where "the belated ministrant of a fallen faith" died beside Gradlon Maur, the Great King. One strange touch of bitterness occurs. "But," exclaims Gwennole, "if the sanctuary be reared here, we shall invade thy last refuge." "As for me . . . !" replies the old man; then, after a silence he adds, with a gesture of infinite weariness, "it is my gods who should protect me. Let them save me if they can." The dying druid turns away to seek his long rest under the sacred oaks: "Gwennole, his heart full of a tender love and pity which he could not understand, moved slowly towards the sea." A fitting close to a book full of interest, charm, and spiritual beauty.

In the third book of St. Adamnan's *Life of St. Columba*, there is an episode entitled "Of a manifestation of angels meeting the soul of

one Emchath." Columba, "making his way beyond the Ridge of Britain (Drum-Alban), near the lake of the river Nisa (Loch Ness), being suddenly inspired by the Holy Spirit, says to the brethren who are journeying with him at that time: 'Let us make haste to meet the holy angels who, that they may carry away the soul of a certain heathen man, who is keeping the moral law of nature even to extreme old age, have been sent out from the highest regions of heaven, and are waiting until we come thither, that we may baptize him in time before he dies.' Thereafter the aged saint made as much haste as he could to go in advance of his companions, until he came to the district which is named Airchartdan (Glen Urquhart)." There he found "the holy heathen man," Emchath by name.

Here, then, is an instance of a Celtic priest in Armorica and of a Celtic priest in Scotland acting identically towards an upright heathen. A large book would be necessary to relate the correspondence between the folk-tales, the traditional romances, and the Christian legends of the four great branches of the Celtic race.

On the seventh day, when God rested, says a poet of the Gael, He dreamed of the lands and

nations he had made, and out of that dreaming were born Ireland and Brittany. Truly, within Christian days, there were more saints, there were more lamps of the spirit lit in that grey peninsula, in that green land, in the little sand-cinctured isle Iona, than anywhere betwixt the Syrian deserts and the meads of Glastonbury. It takes nothing from, it adds much to these lands where spiritual ecstasy has longest dreamed, that the old gods have not perished but merge into the brotherhood of Christ's company; that the old faiths, and the ancient spirit, and the pagan soul were not given to the wave for foam, to the pastures for idle sand. Ireland and Brittany! Behind the sorrowful songs of longing and regret, behind the faint chime of bells which some day linger as an echo in the towers of Ys where she lies under the wave, are the cries of the tympan and the forgotten music of druidic harps. What song the oaks knew in Broceliande, what song Taliesin heard, what chant Merlin the Wild raised among dim woods in Caledon: these may be lost to us for ever, or live only through our songs and dreams as shadows live in the hollows of the sunrain: but Broceliande and Gethsemane are in symbol akin, Taliesin is but another name of him who ate the wild honey

and listened to the wind, and Merlin, with the nuts of wisdom in his hand, stands hearkening to the same deep murmur of the eternal life which was heard upon the Mount of Olives.

It has occurred to me often of late, from what I have seen, and read, and heard from others, that the Celtic mythopoëic faculty is still concerning itself largely with an interweaving of Pagan and Christian thought, of Pagan and Christian symbol, of the old Pagan tales of a day and of mortal beauty with the Christian symbolic legends that are of no day and are of immortal beauty.

A fisherman told me the story of Diarmid and Grainne, in the guise of a legend of the Virgin Mary and her Gaelic husband. Three years ago, in Appin, an old woman, Jessie Stewart, told me that when Christ was crucified He came back to us as Oìsin of the Songs. From a ferryman on Loch Linnhe, near the falls of Lora, a friend heard a confused story of Oìsin (confused because the narrator at one moment spoke of Oìsin, and at another of "Goll"), how on the day that Christ was crucified Oìsin slew his own son, and knew madness, crying that he was but a shadow, and his son a shadow, and that what he had done was but the shadow of

what was being done in that hour "to the black sorrow of time and the universe (*domhain*)." In this connection, Celtic students will recall the story of Concobar mac Nessa, the High King of Ulster : how on that day he rose suddenly and fled into the woods and hewed down the branches of trees, crying that he slew the multitudes of those who at that moment were doing to death the innocent son of a king.

Out of this confusion may arise a new interpretation of certain great symbolic persons and incidents in the old mythology. As this legendary lore is being swiftly forgotten, it is well that it should be saved to new meanings and new beauty, by that mythopoëic faculty which, in the Celtic imagination, is as a wing continually uplifting fallen dreams to the unaging wind of the Spirit.

## THE WIND, SILENCE, AND LOVE

I know one who, asked by a friend desiring more intimate knowledge as to what influences above all other influences had shaped her inward life, answered at once, with that sudden vision of insight which reveals more than the vision of thought, "The Wind, Silence, and Love."

The answer was characteristic, for, with her who made it, the influences that shape have always seemed more significant than the things that are shapen. None can know for another the mysteries of spiritual companionship. What is an abstraction to one is a reality to another: what to one has the proved familiar face, to another is illusion.

I can well understand the one of whom I write. With most of us the shaping influences are the common sweet influences of motherhood and fatherhood, the airs of home, the place and manner of childhood. But these are not for all, and may be adverse, and in some degree absent. Even when a child is fortunate in love and home, it may be

spiritually alien from these: it may dimly discern love rather as a mystery dwelling in sunlight and moonlight, or in the light that lies on quiet meadows, woods, quiet shores: may find a more intimate sound of home in the wind whispering in the grass, or when a sighing travels through the wilderness of leaves, or when an unseen wave moans in the pine.

When we consider, could any influences be deeper than these three elemental powers, for ever young, yet older than age, beautiful immortalities that whisper continually against our mortal ear. The Wind, Silence, and Love: yes, I think of them as good comrades, nobly ministrant, priests of the hidden way.

To go into solitary places, or among trees which await dusk and storm, or by a dark shore; to be a nerve there, to listen to, inwardly to hear, to be at one with, to be as grass filled with, as reeds shaken by, as a wave lifted before, the wind: this is to know what cannot otherwise be known; to hear the intimate, dread voice; to listen to what long, long ago went away, and to what now is going and coming, coming and going, and to what august airs of sorrow and beauty prevail in that dim empire of shadow where the falling leaf rests unfallen,

where Sound, of all else forgotten and forgetting, lives in the pale hyacinth, the moon-white pansy, the cloudy amaranth that gathers dew.

And, in the wood; by the grey stone on the hill; where the heron waits; where the plover wails; on the pillow; in the room filled with flame-warmed twilight; is there any comrade that is as Silence is? Can she not whisper the white secrecies which words discolour? Can she not say, when we would forget, forget; when we would remember, remember? Is it not she also who says, Come unto me all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest? Is it not she who has a lute into which all loveliness of sound has passed, so that when she breathes upon it life is audible? Is it not she who will close many doors, and shut away cries and tumults, and will lead you to a green garden and a fountain in it, and say, "This is your heart, and that is your soul; listen."

That third one, is he a Spirit, alone, uncompanioned? I think sometimes that these three are one, and that Silence is his inward voice and the Wind the sound of his unwearying feet. Does he not come in wind, whether his footfall be on the wild rose, or on the bitter wave, or in the tempest shaken with noises

and rains that are cries and tears, sighs and prayers and tears?

He has many ways, many hopes, many faces. He bends above those who meet in twilight, above the cradle, above dwellers by the hearth, above the sorrowful, above the joyous children of the sun, above the grave. Must he not be divine, who is worshipped of all men? Does not the wild-dove take the rainbow upon its breast because of him, and the salmon leave the sea for inland pools, and the creeping thing become winged and radiant?

The Wind, Silence, and Love: if one cannot learn of these, is there any comradeship that can tell us more, that can more comfort us, that can so inhabit with living light what is waste and barren?

And, in the hidden hour, one will stoop, and kiss us on the brow, when our sudden stillness will, for others, already be memory. And another will be as an open road, with morning breaking. And the third will meet us, with a light of joy in his eyes; but we shall not see him at first because of the sun-blaze, or hear his words because in that summer air the birds will be multitude.

Meanwhile they are near and intimate. Their life uplifts us. We cannot forget

wholly, nor cease to dream, nor be left unhoping, nor be without rest, nor go darkly without torches and songs, if these accompany us; or we them, for they go one way.

## BARABAL

### A MEMORY

I have spoken in "Iona" and elsewhere of the old Highland woman who was my nurse. She was not really old, but to me seemed so, and I have always so thought of her. She was one of the most beautiful and benignant natures I have known.

I owe her a great debt. In a moment, now, I can see her again, with her pale face and great dark eyes, stooping over my bed, singing "Wae's me for Prince Charlie," or an old Gaelic Lament, or that sad, forgotten, beautiful and mournful air that was played at Fotheringay when the Queen of Scots was done to death, "lest her cries should be heard." Or, later, I can hear her telling me old tales before the fire; or, later still, before the glowing peats in her little island-cottage, speaking of men and women, and strange legends, and stranger dreams and visions. To her, and to an old islander, Seumas Macleod, of whom I have elsewhere spoken

in this volume, I owe more than to any other influences in my childhood. Perhaps it is from her that in part I have my great dislike of towns. There is no smoke in the lark's house, to use one of her frequent sayings—one common throughout the west.

I never knew any one whose speech, whose thought, was so coloured with the old wisdom and old sayings and old poetry of her race. To me she stands for the Gaelic woman, strong, steadfast, true to "her own," her people, her clan, her love, herself. "When you come to love," she said to me once, "keep always to the one you love a mouth of silk and a heart of hemp."

Her mind was a storehouse of proverbial lore. Had I been older and wiser, I might have learned less fugitively. I cannot attempt to reach adequately even the most characteristic of these proverbial sayings; it would take overlong. Most of them, of course, would be familiar to our proverb-loving people. But, among others of which I have kept note, I have not anywhere seen the following in print. "You could always tell where his thoughts would be . . . pointing one way like the hounds of Finn" (*i.e.* the two stars of the north, the Pointers): "It's

a comfort to know there's nothing missing, as the wren said when she counted the stars": "The dog's howl is the stag's laugh"; and again, "I would rather cry with the plover than laugh with the dog" (both meaning that the imprisoned comfort of the towns is not to be compared with the life of the hills, for all its wildness). "True love is like a mountain-tarn; it may not be deep, but that's deep enough that can hold the sun, moon, and stars": "It isn't silence where the lark's song ceases": "St. Bride's Flower, St. Bride's Bird, and St. Bride's Gift make a fine spring and a good year." (*Am Beàrnan Bhrigde, 'us Gille-Bhrigde, 'us Lunn-Bata Bhrigde, etc.—the dandelion, the oyster-catcher, and the cradle*[1]—because the dandelion comes with the first south winds and in a sunny spring is seen everywhere, and because in a fine season the oyster-catcher's early breeding-note fortells prosperity with the nets, and because a birth in spring is good luck for child and mother.) "It's easier for most folk to say *Lus Bealtainn* than *La' Bealtainn*": i.e. people can see the

[1] It is probably in the isles only that the pretty word *Lunn-Bata* is used for *crā-all (creathall)*, a cradle. It might best be rendered as boat-on-a-billow, *lunn* being a heaving billow.

small things that concern themselves better than the great things that concern the world; literally, "It's easier to say marigold than may-day"—in Gaelic, a close play upon words: "*Cuir do lamh leinn*," "lend us a hand," as the fox in the ditch said to the duckling on the roadside: "*Gu'm a slàn gu'n till thu*,' "May you return in health," as the young man said when his conscience left him: "It's only a hand's-turn from *eunadair* to *eunadan*" (from the bird-snarer to the cage): "Saying *eud* is next door to saying *eudail*," as the girl laughed back to her sweetheart (*eud* is jealousy and *eudail* my Treasure): "The lark doesn't need *broggan* (shoes) to climb the stairs of the sky."

Among those which will not be new to some readers, I have note of a rhyme about the stars of the four seasons, and a saying about the three kinds of love, and the four stars of destiny. Wind comes from the spring star, runs the first; heat from the summer star, water from the autumn star, and frost from the winter star. Barabal's variant was "wind (air) from the spring star in the east; fire (heat) from the summer star in the south; water from the autumn star in the west; wisdom, silence and death from the

star in the north." Both this season-rhyme and that of the three kinds of love are well known. The latter runs :—

*Gaol nam fear-dìolain, mar shruth-lìonaidh na mara ;*
*Gaol nam fear-fuadain, mar ghaoith tuath 'thig o'n charraig ;*
*Gaol nam fear-posda, mar luing a' seòladh gu cala.*

*Lawless love is as the wild tides of the sea ;*
*And the roamer's love cruel as the north wind blowing from barren rocks ;*
*But wedded love is like the ship coming safe home to haven.*

I have found these two and many others of Barabal's sayings and rhymes, except those I have first given, in collections of proverbs and folklore, but do not remember having noted another, though doubtless "The Four Stars of Destiny (or Fate)" will be recalled by some. It ran somewhat as follows :—

*Reul Near* (Star of the East), Give us kindly birth;
*Reul Deas* (Star of the South), Give us great love;
*Reul Niar* (Star of the West), Give us quiet age;
*Reul Tuath* (Star of the North), Give us Death.

It was from her I first heard of the familiar legend of the waiting of Fionn and the Fèinn (popularly now Fingal and the

Fingalians), "fo-gheasaibh," spellbound, till the day of their return to the living world. In effect the several legends are the same. That which Barabal told was as an isleswoman would more naturally tell it. A man so pure that he could give a woman love and yet let angels fan the flame in his heart, and so innocent that his thoughts were white as a child's thoughts, and so brave that none could withstand him, climbed once to the highest mountain in the Isles, where there is a great cave that no one has ever entered. A huge white hound slept at the entrance to the cave. He stepped over it, and it did not wake. He entered, and passed four tall demons, with bowed heads and folded arms, one with great wings of red, another with wings of white, another with wings of green, and another with wings of black. They did not uplift their dreadful eyes. Then he saw Fionn and the Fèinn sitting in a circle.

Their long hair trailed on the ground; their eyebrows fell to their beards; their beards lay upon their feet, so that nothing of their bodies was seen but hands like scarped rocks that clasped gigantic swords. Behind them hung an elk-horn with a mouth of gold. He blew this horn, but nothing happened,

except that the huge white hound came in, and went to the hollow place round which the Fèinn sat, and in silence ate greedily of treasures of precious stones. He blew the horn again, and Fionn and all the Fèinn opened their great, cold, grey, lifeless eyes, and stared upon him; and for him it was as though he stood at a grave and the dead man in the grave put up strong hands and held his feet, and as though his soul saw Fear.

But with a mighty effort he blew the horn a third time. The Fèinn leaned on their elbows, and Fionn said, "Is the end come?" But the man could wait no more, and turned and fled, leaving that ancient mighty company leaning upon its elbow, spellbound thus, waiting for the end. So they shall be found. The four demons fled into the air, and tumultuous winds swung him from that place. He heard the baying of the white hound, and the mountain vanished. He was found lying dead in a pasture in the little island that was his home. I recall this here because the legend was plainly in Barabal's mind when her last ill came upon her. In her delirium she cried suddenly, "The Fèinn! The Fèinn! they are coming down the hill!"

"I hear the bells of the ewes," she said abruptly, just before the end: so by that we knew she was already upon far pastures, and heard the Shepherd calling upon the sheep to come into the fold.

## THE WHITE HERON

It was in summer, when there is no night among these Northern Isles. The slow, hot days waned through a long after-glow of rose and violet; and when the stars came, it was only to reveal purple depths within depths.

Mary Macleod walked, barefoot, through the dewy grass, on the long western slope of Innisròn, looking idly at the phantom flake of the moon as it hung like a blown moth above the rose-flush of the West. Below it, beyond her, the ocean. It was pale, opalescent; here shimmering with the hues of the moonbow; here dusked with violet shadow, but, for the most part, pale, opalescent. No wind moved, but a breath arose from the momentary lips of the sea. The cool sigh floated inland, and made a continual faint tremor amid the salt grasses. The skuas and guillemots stirred, and at long intervals screamed.

The girl stopped, staring seaward. The illimitable, pale, unlifted wave; the hinted dusk of the quiet underwaters; the unfathom-

able violet gulfs overhead;—these silent comrades were not alien to her. Their kin, she was but a moving shadow on an isle; to her, they were the veils of wonder beyond which the soul knows no death, but looks upon the face of Beauty, and upon the eyes of Love, and upon the heart of Peace.

Amid these silent spaces two dark objects caught the girl's gaze. Flying eastward, a solander trailed a dusky wing across the sky. So high its flight that the first glance saw it as though motionless; yet, even while Mary looked, the skyfarer waned suddenly, and that which had been was not. The other object had wings too, but was not a bird. A fishing-smack lay idly becalmed, her red-brown sail now a patch of warm dusk. Mary knew what boat it was—the *Nighean Donn*, out of Fionnaphort in Ithona, the westernmost of the Iarraidh Isles.

There was no one visible on board the *Nighean Donn*, but a boy's voice sang a monotonous Gaelic cadence, indescribably sweet as it came, remote and wild as an air out of a dim forgotten world, across the still waters. Mary Macleod knew the song, a strange *iorram* or boat-song made by Pòl the Freckled, and by him given to his friend Angus Macleod of Ithona. She muttered the words

over and over, as the lilt of the boyish voice rose and fell—

It is not only when the sea is dark and chill and desolate
I hear the singing of the queen who lives beneath the ocean:
Oft have I heard her chanting voice when moon o'erfloods his golden gate,
Or when the moonshine fills the wave with snow-white mazy motion.

And some day will it hap to me, when the black waves are leaping,
Or when within the breathless green I see her shell-strewn door,
That singing voice will lure me where my sea-drown'd love lies sleeping
Beneath the slow white hands of her who rules the sunken shore.

For in my heart I hear the bells that ring their fatal beauty.
The wild, remote, uncertain bells that chant their lonely sorrow:
The lonely bells of sorrow, the bells of fatal beauty,
Oft in my heart I hear the bells, who soon shall know no morrow.

The slow splashing of oars in the great hollow cavern underneath her feet sent a flush to her face. She knew who was there —that it was the little boat of the *Nighean Donn*, and that Angus Macleod was in it.

She stood among the seeding grasses, intent. The cluster of white moon-daisies that reached to her knees was not more pale than her white face; for a white silence was upon Mary Macleod in her dreaming girlhood, as in her later years.

She shivered once as she listened to Angus's echoing song, while he secured his boat, and began to climb from ledge to ledge. He too had heard the lad Uille Ban singing as he lay upon a coil of rope, while the smack lay idly on the unmoving waters; and hearing, had himself taken up the song—

*For in my heart I hear the bells that ring their fatal beauty,*
*The wild, remote, uncertain bells that chant their lonely sorrow:*
*The lonely bells of sorrow, the bells of fatal beauty,*
*Oft in my heart I hear the bells, who soon shall know no morrow.*

Mary shivered with the vague fear that had come upon her. Had she not dreamed, in the bygone night, that she heard some one in the sea singing that very song—some one with slow, white hands which waved idly above a dead man? A moment ago she had listened to the same song sung by the lad Uille Ban; and now, for the third time, she

heard Angus idly chanting it as he rose invisibly from ledge to ledge of the great cavern below. Three idle songs yet she remembered that death was but the broken refrain of an idle song.

When Angus leaped onto the slope and came towards her, she felt her pulse quicken. Tall and fair, he looked fairer and taller than she had ever seen him. The light that was still in the west lingered in his hair, which, yellow as it was, now glistened as with the sheen of bronze. He had left his cap in the boat; and as he crossed swiftly towards her, she realized anew that he deserved the Gaelic name given him by Pòl the poet—Angus the yellow-haired son of Youth. They had never spoken of their love, and now both realized in a flash that no words were needed. At mid-summer noon no one says the sun shines.

Angus came forward with outreaching hands. "Dear, dear love!" he whispered. "Mhairi mo rùn, muirnean, mochree!"

She put her hands in his; she put her lips to his; she put her head to his breast, and listened, all her life throbbing in response to the leaping pulse of the heart that loved her.

"Dear, dear love!" he whispered again.

"Angus!" she murmured.

They said no more, but moved slowly onward, hand in hand.

The night had their secret. For sure, it was in the low sighing of the deep when the tide put its whispering lips against the sleeping sea; it was in the spellbound silences of the isle; it was in the phantasmal light of the stars—the stars of dream, in a sky of dream, in a world of dream. When, an hour—or was it an eternity, or a minute?—later, they turned, she to her home near the clachan of Innisròn, he to his boat, a light air had come up on the forehead of the tide. The sail of the *Nighean Donn* flapped, a dusky wing in the darkness. The penetrating smell of sea-mist was in the air.

Mary had only one regret as she turned her face inland, when once the invisibly gathering mist hid from her even the blurred semblance of the smack—that she had not asked Angus to sing no more that song of Pòl the Freckled, which vaguely she feared, and even hated She had stood listening to the splashing of the oars, and, later, to the voices of Angus and Uille Ban; and now, coming faintly and to her weirdly through the gloom, she heard her lover's voice chanting the words again. What made him sing that song, in that hour, on this day of all days?

For in my heart I hear the bells that ring their fatal beauty,
The wild, remote, uncertain bells that chant their lonely sorrow:
The lonely bells of sorrow, the bells of fatal beauty,
Oft in my heart I hear the bells, who soon shall know no morrow.

But long before she was back at the peat-fire again she forgot that sad, haunting cadence, and remembered only his words—the dear words of him whom she loved, as he came towards her, across the dewy grass, with outstretched hands—

"Dear, dear love!—Mhairi mo rùn, muirnean, mochree!"

She saw them in the leaping shadows in the little room; in the red glow that flickered along the fringes of the peats; in the darkness which, like a sea, drowned the lonely croft. She heard them in the bubble of the meal, as slowly with wooden spurtle she stirred the porridge; she heard them in the rising wind that had come in with the tide; she heard them in the long resurge and multitudinous shingly inrush as the hands of the Atlantic tore at the beaches of Innisròn.

After the smooring of the peats, and when the two old people, the father of her father and his white-haired wife, were asleep, she

sat for a long time in the warm darkness. From a cranny in the peat ash a smouldering flame looked out comfortingly. In the girl's heart a great peace was come as well as a great joy. She had dwelled so long with silence that she knew its eloquent secrets; and it was sweet to sit there in the dusk, and listen, and commune with silence, and dream.

Above the long, deliberate rush of the tidal waters round the piled beaches she could hear a dull, rhythmic beat. It was the screw of some great steamer, churning its way through the darkness; a stranger, surely, for she knew the times and seasons of every vessel that came near these lonely isles. Sometimes it happened that the Uist or Tiree steamers passed that way; doubtless it was the Tiree boat, or possibly the big steamer that once or twice in the summer fared northward to far-off St. Kilda.

She must have slept, and the sound have passed into her ears as an echo into a shell; for when, with a start, she arose, she still heard the thud-thud of the screw, although the boat had long since passed away.

It was the cry of a sea-bird which had startled her. Once—twice—the scream had whirled about the house. Mary listened, intent. Once more it came, and at the same moment

she saw a drift of white press up against the window.

She sprang to her feet, startled.

"It is the cry of a heron," she muttered, with dry lips; "but who has heard tell of a white heron?—and the bird there is white as a snow-wreath."

Some uncontrollable impulse made her hesitate. She moved to go to the window, to see if the bird were wounded, but she could not. Sobbing with inexplicable fear, she turned and fled, and a moment later was in her own little room. There all her fear passed. Yet she could not sleep for long. If only she could get the sound of that beating screw out of her ears, she thought. But she could not, neither waking nor sleeping; nor the following day; nor any day thereafter; and when she died, doubtless she heard the thud-thud of a screw as it churned the dark waters in a night of shrouding mist.

For on the morrow she learned that the *Nighean Donn* had been run down in the mist, a mile south of Ithona, by an unknown steamer. The great vessel came out of the darkness, unheeding; unheeding she passed into the darkness again. Perhaps the officer in command thought that his vessel had run into some floating wreckage; for there was

no cry heard, and no lights had been seen. Later, only one body was found—that of the boy Uille Ban.

When heartbreaking sorrow comes, there is no room for words. Mary Macleod said little; what, indeed, was there to say? The islanders gave what kindly comfort they could. The old minister, when next he came to Innisròn, spoke of the will of God and the Life Eternal.

Mary bowed her head. What had been, was not: could any words, could any solace, better that?

"You are young, Mary," said Mr. Macdonald, when he had prayed with her. "God will not leave you desolate."

She turned upon him her white face, with her great, brooding, dusky eyes:

"Will He give me back Angus?" she said, in her low, still voice, that had the hush in it of lonely places.

He could not tell her so.

"It was to be," she said, breaking the long silence that had fallen between them.

"Ay," the minister answered.

She looked at him, and then took his hand. "I am thanking you, Mr. Macdonald, for the good words you have put upon my sorrow. But I am not wishing that any more

be said to me. I must go now, for I have to see to the milking, an' I hear the poor beasts lowing on the hillside. The old folk too are weary, and I must be getting them their porridge."

After that no one ever heard Mary Macleod speak of Angus. She was a good lass, all agreed, and made no moan ; and there was no croft tidier than Scaur-a-van, and because of her it was ; and she made butter better than any on Innisròn ; and in the isles there was no cheese like the Scaur-a-van cheese.

Had there been any kith or kin of Angus, she would have made them hers. She took the consumptive mother of Uille Ban from Ithona, and kept her safe-havened at Scaur-a-van, till the woman sat up one night in her bed, and cried in a loud voice that Uille Ban was standing by her side and playing a wild air on the strings of her heart, which he had in his hands, and the strings were breaking, she cried, They broke, and Mary envied her, and the whispering joy she would be having with Uille Ban. But Angus had no near kin. Perhaps, she thought, he would miss her the more where he had gone. He had a friend, whom she had never seen. He was a man of Iona, and was named Eachain MacEachain

Maclean. He and Angus had been boys in the same boat, and sailed thrice to Iceland together, and once to Peterhead, that maybe was as far or further, or perhaps upon the coast-lands further east. Mary knew little geography, though she could steer by the stars. To this friend she wrote, through the minister, to say that if ever he was in trouble he was to come to her.

It was on the third night after the sinking of the *Nighean Donn* that Mary walked alone, beyond the shingle beaches, and where the ledges of trap run darkly into deep water. It was a still night and clear. The lambs and ewes were restless in the moonshine; their bleating filled the upper solitudes. A shoal of mackerel made a spluttering splashing sound beyond the skerries outside the haven. The ebb, sucking at the weedy extremes of the ledges, caused a continuous bubbling sound. There was no stir of air, only a breath upon the sea; but, immeasurably remote, frayed clouds, like trailed nets in yellow gulfs of moonlight, shot flame-shaped tongues into the dark, and seemed to lick the stars as these shook in the wind. "No mist to-night," Mary muttered; then, startled by her own words, repeated, and again repeated, "There will be no mist to-night."

Then she stood as though become stone. Before her, on a solitary rock, a great bird sat. It was a heron. In the moonshine its plumage glistened white as foam of the sea; white as one of her lambs it was.

She had never seen, never heard of, a white heron. There was some old Gaelic song—what was it?—no, she could not remember—something about the souls of the dead. The words would not come.

Slowly she advanced. The heron did not stir. Suddenly she fell upon her knees, and reached out her arms, and her hair fell about her shoulders, and her heart beat against her throat, and the grave gave up its sorrow, and she cried—

"Oh, Angus, Angus, my beloved! Angus, Angus, my dear, dear love!"

She heard nothing, saw nothing, felt nothing, knew nothing, till, numbed and weak, she stirred with a cry, for some creeping thing of the sea had crossed her hand. She rose and stared about her. There was nothing to give her fear. The moon rays danced on a glimmering sea-pasture far out upon the water; their lances and javelins flashed and glinted merrily. A dog barked as she crossed the flag-stones at Scaur-a-van, then suddenly

began a strange furtive baying. She called, "Luath! Luath!"

The dog was silent a moment, then threw its head back and howled, abruptly breaking again into a sustained baying. The echo swept from croft to croft, and wakened every dog upon the isle.

Mary looked back. Slowly circling behind her she saw the white heron. With a cry, she fled into the house.

For three nights thereafter she saw the white heron. On the third she had no fear. She followed the foam-white bird; and when she could not see it, then she followed its wild, plaintive cry. At dawn she was still at Ardfeulan, on the western side of Innisròn; but her arms were round the drowned heart whose pulse she had heard leap so swift in joy, and her lips put a vain warmth against the dear face that was wan as spent foam, and as chill as that.

Three years after that day Mary saw again the white heron. She was alone now, and she was glad, for she thought Angus had come, and she was ready.

Yet neither death nor sorrow happened. Thrice, night after night, she saw the white gleam of nocturnal wings, heard the strange bewildering cry.

It was on the fourth day, when a fierce gale covered the isle with a mist of driving spray. No Innisròn boat was outside the haven; for that, all were glad. But in the late afternoon a cry went from mouth to mouth.

There was a fishing-coble on the Skerries! That meant death for all on board, for nothing could be done. The moment came soon. A vast drowning billow leaped forward, and when the cloud of spray had scattered, there was no coble to be seen. Only one man was washed ashore, nigh dead, upon the spar he clung to. His name was Eachain MacEachain, son of a Maclean of Iona.

And that was how Mary Macleod met the friend of Angus, and he a ruined man, and how she put her life to his, and they were made one.

Her man . . . yes, he was her man, to whom she was loyal and true, and whom she loved right well for many years. But she knew, and he too knew well, that she had wedded one man in her heart, and that no other could take his place there, then or for ever. She had one husband only, but it was not he to whom she was wed, but Angus, the son of Alasdair—him whom she loved with the deep

love that surpasseth all wisdom of the world that ever was, or is, or shall be.

And Eachain her man lived out his years with her, and was content, though he knew that in her silent heart his wife, who loved him well, had only one lover, one dream, one hope, one passion, one remembrance, one husband.

## THE SMOOTHING OF THE HAND

Glad am I that wherever and whenever I listen intently I can hear the looms of Nature weaving Beauty and Music. But some of the most beautiful things are learned otherwise—by hazard, in the Way of Pain, or at the Gate of Sorrow.

I learned two things on the day when I saw Seumas McIan dead upon the heather. He of whom I speak was the son of Ian McIan Alltnalee, but was known throughout the home straths and the countries beyond as Seumas Dhu, Black James, or, to render the subtler meaning implied in this instance, James the Dark One. I had wondered occasionally at the designation, because Seumas, if not exactly fair, was not dark. But the name was given to him, as I learned later, because, as commonly rumoured, he knew that which he should not have known.

I had been spending some weeks with Alasdair McIan and his wife Silis (who was my foster-sister), at their farm of Ardoch, high

in a remote hill country. One night we were sitting before the peats, listening to the wind crying amid the corries, though, ominously as it seemed to us, there was not a breath in the rowan-tree that grew in the sun's way by the house. Silis had been singing, but silence had come upon us. In the warm glow from the fire we saw each other's faces. There the silence lay, strangely still and beautiful, as snow in moonlight. Silis's song was one of the *Dana Spioradail*, known in Gaelic as the Hymn of the Looms. I cannot recall it, nor have I ever heard or in any way encountered it again.

It had a lovely refrain, I know not whether its own or added by Silis. I have heard her chant it to other runes and songs. Now, when too late, my regret is deep that I did not take from her lips more of those sorrowful, strange songs or chants, with their ancient Celtic melodies, so full of haunting sweet melancholy, which she loved so well. It was with this refrain that, after a long stillness, she startled us that October night. I remember the sudden light in the eyes of Alasdair McIan, and the beat at my heart, when, like rain in a wood, her voice fell unawares upon us out of the silence :

*Oh! oh! ohrone, arone! Oh! oh! mo ghraidh, mo chridhe!*
*Oh! oh! mo ghraidh, mo chridhe!* [1]

The wail, and the sudden break in the second line, had always upon me an effect of inexpressible pathos. Often that sad wind-song has been in my ears, when I have been thinking of many things that are passed and are passing.

I know not what made Silis so abruptly begin to sing, and with that wailing couplet only, or why she lapsed at once into silence again. Indeed, my remembrance of the incident at all is due to the circumstance that shortly after Silis had turned her face to the peats again, a knock came to the door, and then Seumas Dhu entered.

"Why do you sing that lament, Silis, sister of my father?" he asked, after he had seated himself beside me, and spread his thin hands against the peat glow, so that the flame seemed to enter within the flesh.

Silis turned to her nephew, and looked at him, as I thought, questioningly. But she did not speak. He, too, said nothing more, either forgetful of his question, or content with what

[1] Pronounce mogh-rây, mogh-rēe (my heart's delight—*lit.* my dear one, my heart).

he had learned or failed to learn through her silence.

The wind had come down from the corries before Seumas rose to go. He said he was not returning to Alltnalee, but was going upon the hill, for a big herd of deer had come over the ridge of Mel Mòr. Seumas, though skilled in all hill and forest craft, was not a sure shot, as was his kinsman and my host, Alasdair McIan.

"You will need help," I remember Alasdair Ardoch saying mockingly, adding, "*Co dhiubh is fhearr let mise thoir sealladh na fàileadh dhiubh?*"—that is to say, Whether would you rather me to deprive them of sight or smell?

This is a familiar saying among the old sportsmen in my country, where it is believed that a few favoured individuals have the power to deprive deer of either sight or smell, as the occasion suggests.

"*Dhuit ciàr nan carn!*—The gloom of the rocks be upon you!" replied Seumas, sullenly: "mayhap the hour is come when the red stag will sniff at my nostrils."

With that dark saying he went. None of us saw him again alive.

Was it a forewarning? I have often wondered. Or had he sight of the shadow?

It was three days after this, and shortly after sunrise, that, on crossing the south slope of Mel Mòr with Alasdair Ardoch, we came suddenly upon the body of Seumas, half submerged in a purple billow of heather. It did not, at the moment, occur to me that he was dead. I had not known that his prolonged absence had been noted, or that he had been searched for. As a matter of fact, he must have died immediately before our approach, for his limbs were still loose, and he lay as a sleeper lies.

Alasdair kneeled and raised his kinsman's head. When it lay upon the purple tussock, thè warmth and glow from the sunlit ling gave a fugitive deceptive light to the pale face. I know not whether the sun can have any chemic action upon the dead. But it seemed to me that a dream rose to the face of Seumas, like one of those submarine flowers that are said to rise at times and be visible for a moment in the hollow of a wave. The dream, the light, waned; and there was a great stillness and white peace where the trouble had been. "It is the Smoothing of the Hand," said Alasdair McIan, in a hushed voice.

Often I had heard this lovely phrase in the Western Isles, but always as applied to

sleep. When a fretful child suddenly falls into quietude and deep slumber, an isles-woman will say that it is because of the Smoothing of the Hand. It is always a profound sleep, and there are some who hold it almost as a sacred thing, and never to be disturbed.

So, thinking only of this, I whispered to my friend to come away; that Seumas was dead weary with hunting upon the hills; that he would awake in due time.

McIan looked at me, hesitated, and said nothing. I saw him glance around, A few yards away, beside a great boulder in the heather, a small rowan stood, flickering its feather-like shadows across the white wool of a ewe resting underneath. He moved thitherward, slowly, plucked a branch heavy with scarlet berries, and then, having returned, laid it across the breast of his kinsman.

I knew now what was that passing of the trouble in the face of Seumas Dhu, what that sudden light was, that calming of the sea, that ineffable quietude. It was the Smoothing of the Hand.

## THE WHITE FEVER

One night, before the peats, I was told this thing by old Cairstine Macdonald, in the isle of Benbecula. It is in her words that I give it :

In the spring of the year that my boy Tormaid died, the moon-daisies were as thick as a woven shroud over the place where Giorsal, the daughter of Ian, the son of Ian MacLeod of Baille 'n Bad-a-sgailich, slept night and day.[1]

All that March the cormorants screamed, famished. There were few fish in the sea, and no kelp-weed was washed up by the high tides. In the island and in the near isles, ay, and far north through the mainland, the blight lay. Many sickened. I knew young mothers who had no milk. There are green

[1] *Baille 'n Bad-a-sgailich :* the Farm of the Shadowy Clump of Trees. *Cairstine*, or *Cairistine*, is the Gaelic for *Christina* (for *Christian*), as *Tormaid* is for Norman, and *Giorsal* for Grace. "The quiet havens" is the beautiful island phrase for graves. Here, also, a swift and fatal consumption that falls upon the doomed is called "The White Fever." By "the mainland," Harris and the Lewis are meant.

mounds in Carnan kirkyard that will be telling you of what this meant. Here and there are little green mounds, each so small that you might cuddle it in your arm under your plaid.

Tormaid sickened. A bad day was that for him when he came home, weary with the sea, and drenched to the skin, because of a gale that caught him and his mates off Barra Head. When the March winds tore down the Minch, and leaped out from over the Cuchullins, and came west, and lay against our homes, where the peats were sodden and there was little food, the minister told me that my lad would be in the quiet havens before long. This was because of the white fever. It was of that same that Giorsal waned, and went out like a thin flame in sunlight.

The son of my man (years ago weary no more) said little ever. He ate nothing almost, even of the next to nothing we had. At nights he couldna sleep because of his cough. The coming of May lifted him awhile. I hoped he would see the autumn ; and that if he did, and the herring came, and the harvest was had, and what wi' this and what wi' that, he would forget his Giorsal that lay i' the mools in the quiet place yonder. Maybe

then, I thought, the sorrow would go, and take its shadow with it.

One gloaming he came in with all the whiteness of his wasted body in his face. His heart was out of its shell; and mine, too, at the sight of him.[1]

This was the season of the hanging of the dog's mouth.

"What is it, Tormaid-a-ghaolach?" I asked, with the sob that was in my throat.

"*Thraisg mo chridhe*," he muttered (My heart is parched). Then, feeling the asking in my eyes, he said, "I have seen her."

I knew he meant Giorsal. My heart sank. But I wore my nails into the palms of my hands. Then I said this thing, that is an old saying in the isles: "Those who are in the quiet havens hear neither the wind nor the sea." He was so weak he could not lie down in the bed. He was in the big chair before the peats, with his feet on a *claar*.

[1] *A cockall a' chridhe:* his heart out of its shell—a phrase often used to express sudden derangement from any shock. The ensuing phrase means the month from the 15th of July to the 15th of August, *Mios crochaidh nan con*, so called as it is supposed to be the hottest, if not the most waterless, month in the isles. The word *claar*, used below, is the name given a small wooden tub, into which the potatoes are turned when boiled.

When the wind was still I read him the Word. A little warm milk was all he would take. I could hear the blood in his lungs sobbing like the ebb-tide in the sea-weed. This was the thing that he said to me:

"She came to me, like a grey mist, beyond the dyke of the green place, near the road. The face of her was grey as a grey dawn, but the voice was hers, though I heard it under a wave, so dull and far was it. And these are her words to me, and mine to her—and the first speaking was mine, for the silence wore me:

Am bheil thu' falbh,
O mo ghraidh?
*B'idh mi falbh,*
*Mùirnean!*

C'uin a thilleas tu,
O mo ghraidh?

*Cha till mi an rathad so;*
*Tha an't ait e cumhann—*
*O Mùirnean, Mùirnean!*
*B'idh mi falbh an drùgh*
*Am tigh Pharais,*
*Mùirnean!*

Sèol dhomh an rathad,
Mo ghraidh!
*Thig an so, Mùirnean-mo*
*Thig an so!*

Are you going,
My dear one?
*Yea, now I am going,*
*Dearest.*

When will you come again,
My dear one?
*I will not return this way;*
*The place is narrow—*
*O my Darling!*
*I will be going to Paradise,*
*Dear, my dear one!*

Show me the way,
Heart of my heart!
*Come hither, dearest, come hither,*
*Come with me!*

"And then I saw that it was a mist, and that I was alone. But now this night it is that I feel the breath on the soles of my feet."

And with that I knew there was no hope. "*Ma tha sin an dàn!* . . . if that be ordained," was all that rose to my lips. It was that night he died. I fell asleep in the second hour. When I woke in the grey dawn, his face was greyer than that, and more cold.

## THE SEA-MADNESS

I know a man who keeps a little store in a village by one of the lochs of Argyll. He is about fifty, is insignificant, commonplace, in his interests parochial, and on Sundays painful to see in his sleek respectability. He lives within sight of the green and grey waters, above which grey mountains stand; across the kyle is a fair wilderness; but to my knowledge he never for pleasure goes upon the hills, nor stands by the shore, unless it be of a Saturday night to watch the herring-boats come in, or on a Sabbath afternoon when he has word with a friend.

Yet this man is one of the strangest men I have met or am like to meet. From himself I have never heard word but the commonest, and that in a manner somewhat servile. I know his one intimate friend, however. At intervals (sometimes of two or three years, latterly each year for three years in succession) this village chandler forgets, and is suddenly become what he was, or what some ancestor was, in unremembered days.

For a day or two he is listless, in a still sadness; speaking, when he has to speak, in a low voice; and often looking about him with sidelong eyes. Then one day he will leave his counter and go to the shed behind his shop, and stand for a time frowning and whispering, or perhaps staring idly, and then go bareheaded up the hillside, and along tangled ways of bog and heather, and be seen no more for weeks.

He goes down through the wilderness locally called The Broken Rocks. When he is there, he is a strong man, leaping like a goat—swift and furtive. At times he strips himself bare, and sits on a rock staring at the sun. Oftenest he walks along the shore, or goes stumbling among weedy boulders, calling loudly upon the sea. His friend, of whom I have spoken, told me that he had again and again seen Anndra stoop and lift handfuls out of the running wave and throw the water above his head while he screamed or shouted strange Gaelic words, some incoherent, some old as the grey rocks. Once he was seen striding into the sea, batting it with his hands, smiting the tide-swell, and defying it and deriding it, with stifled laughters that gave way to cries and sobs of broken hate and love.

He sang songs to it. He threw bracken,

and branches, and stones at it, cursing: then falling on his knees would pray, and lift the water to his lips, and put it on his head. He loved the sea as a man loves a woman. It was his light o' love: his love: his God. Than that desire of his I have not heard of any more terrible. To love the wind and the salt wave, and be for ever mocked of the one and baffled of the other; to lift a heart of flame, and have the bleak air quench it; to stoop, whispering, and kiss the wave, and have its saltness sting the lips and blind the eyes: this indeed is to know that bitter thing of which so many have died after tears, broken hearts, and madness.

His friend, whom I will call Neil, once came upon him when he was in dread. Neil was in a boat, and had sailed close inshore on the flow. Anndra saw him, and screamed.

"I know who you are! Keep away!" he cried. "*Fear faire na h'aon sùla*—I know you for the One-Eyed Watcher!"

"Then," said Neil, "the salt wave went out of his eyes and he knew me, and fell on his knees, and wept, and said he was dying of an old broken love. And with that he ran down to the shore, and lifted a palmful of water to his lips, so that for a moment foam hung upon his tangled beard, and called out to his love, and was sore bitter upon her, and then up and

laughed and scrambled out of sight, though I heard him crying among the rocks."

I asked Neil who the One-Eyed Watcher was. He said he was a man who had never died and never lived. He had only one eye, but that could see through anything except grey granite, the grey crow's egg, and the grey wave that swims at the bottom. He could see the dead in the water, and watched for them: he could see those on the land who came down near the sea, if they had death on them. On these he had no pity. But he was unseen except at dusk and in the grey dawn. He came out of a grave. He was not a man, but he lived upon the deaths of men. It was worse to be alive, and see him, than to be dead and at his feet.

When the man Anndra's madness went away from him—sometimes in a week or two weeks, sometimes not for three weeks or more—he would come back across the hill. In the dark he would slip down through the bracken and bog-myrtle, and wait a while among the ragged fuchsias at the dyke of his potato-patch. Then he would creep in at the window of his room, or perhaps lift the door-latch and go quietly to his bed. Once Neil was there when he returned. Neil was speaking to Anndra's sister, who kept house for the

poor man. They heard a noise, and the sudden flurried clucking of hens.

"It's Anndra," said the woman, with a catch in her throat; and they sat in silence, till the door opened. He had been away five weeks, and hair and beard were matted, and his face was death-white; but he had already slipped into his habitual clothes, and looked the quiet respectable man he was. The two who were waiting for him did not speak.

"It's a fine night," he said; "it's a fine night, an' no wind.—Marget, it's time we had in mair o' thae round cheeses fra Inverary."

## EARTH, FIRE, AND WATER

In "The Sea-Madness" I have told of a man—a quiet dull man, a chandler of a little Argyll loch-town—who, at times, left his counter, and small canny ways, and went out into a rocky wilderness, and became mad with the sea. I have heard of many afflicted in some such wise, and have known one or two.

In a tale written a few years ago, "The Ninth Wave," I wrote of one whom I knew, one Ivor MacNeill, or "Carminish," so called because of his farm between the hills Strondeval and Rondeval, near the Obb of Harris in the Outer Hebrides. This man heard the secret calling of the ninth wave. None may hear that, when there is no wave on the sea, or when perhaps he is inland, and not follow. That following is always to the ending of all following. For a long while Carminish put his fate from him. He went to other isles: wherever he went he heard the call of the sea. "Come," it cried, "come, come away!" He passed at last to a kinsman's croft on Aird-Vanish in the island of Taransay. He was

not free there. He stopped at a place where he had no kin, and no memories, and at a hidden, quiet farm. This was at Eilean Mhealastaidh, which is under the morning shadow of Griomabhal on the mainland. His nights there were a sleepless dread. He went to other places. The sea called. He went at last to his cousin Eachainn MacEachainn's bothy, near Callernish in the Lews, where the Druid Stones stand by the shore and hear nothing for ever but the noise of the waves and the cry of the sea-wind. There, weary in hope, he found peace at last. He slept, and none called upon him. He began to smile, and to hope.

One night the two were at the porridge, and Eachainn was muttering his *Bui 'cheas dha 'n Ti*, the Thanks to the Being, when Carminish leaped to his feet, and with a white face stood shaking like a rope in the wind.

In the grey dawn they found his body, stiff and salt with the ooze.

I did not know, but I have heard of another who had a light tragic end. Some say he was witless. Others, that he had the Friday-Fate upon him. I do not know what evil he had done, but "some one" had met him and said to him "*Bidh ruith na h'Aoin' ort am*

*Feasda*," "The Friday-Fate will follow you for ever." So it was said. But I was told this of him: that he had been well and strong and happy, and did not know he had a terrible gift, that some have who are born by the sea. It is not well to be born on a Friday night, within sound of the sea; or on certain days. This gift is the "*Eòlas na h'Aoine*," the Friday-Spell. He who has this gift must not look upon any other while bathing: if he does, that swimmer must drown. This man, whom I will call Finlay, had this eòlas. Three times the evil happened. But the third time he knew what he did: the man who swam in the sunlight loved the same woman as Finlay loved; so he stood on the shore, and looked, and laughed. When the body was brought home, the woman struck Finlay in the face. He grew strange after a time, and at last witless. A year later it was a cold February. Finlay went to and fro singing an old February rhyme beginning:

*Feadag, Feadag, mathair Faoillich fhuair!*

(Plover, plover, Mother of the bleak Month). He was watching a man ploughing. Suddenly he threw down his cromak. He leaped over a dyke, and ran to the shore, calling,

"I'm coming! I'm coming! Don't pull me—I'm coming!" He fell upon the rocks, which had a blue bloom on them like fruit, for they were covered with mussels; and he was torn, so that his hands and face were streaming red. "I am your red, red love," he cried, "sweetheart, my love"; and with that he threw himself into the sea.

More often the sea-call is not a madness," but an inward voice. I have been told of a man who was a farmer in Carrick of Ayr. He left wife and home because of the calling of the sea. But when he was again in the far isles, where he had lived formerly, he was well once more. Another man heard the sobbing of the tide among seaweed whenever he dug in his garden: and gave up all, and even the woman he loved, and left. She won him back, by her love; but on the night before their marriage, in that inland place where her farm was, he slipt away and was not seen again. Again, there was the man of whom I have spoken in "Iona," who went to the mainland, but could not see to plough because the brown fallows became waves that splashed noisily about him: and how he went to Canada and got work in a great warehouse, but among the bales of merchandise heard continually the singular note of the

sandpiper, while every hour the sea-fowl confused him with their crying.

I have myself in lesser degree, known this irresistible longing. I am not fond of towns, but some years ago I had to spend a winter in a great city. It was all-important to me not to leave during January; and in one way I was not ill-pleased, for it was a wild winter. But one night I woke, hearing a rushing sound in the street—the sound of water. I would have thought no more of it, had I not recognised the troubled noise of the tide, and the sucking and lapsing of the flow in weedy hollows. I rose and looked out. It was moonlight, and there was no water. When, after sleepless hours, I rose in the grey morning I heard the splash of waves. All that day and the next I heard the continual noise of waves. I could not write or read; at last I could not rest. On the afternoon of the third day the waves dashed up against the house. I said what I could to my friends, and left by the night train. In the morning we (for a kinswoman was with me) stood on Greenock Pier waiting for the Hebridean steamer, the *Clansman*, and before long were landed on an island, almost the nearest we could reach, and one that I loved well. We had to be landed some miles from the place I wanted to go to,

and it was a long and cold journey. The innumerable little waterfalls hung in icicles among the mosses, ferns, and white birches on the roadsides. Before we reached our destination, we saw a wonderful sight. From three great mountains, their flanks flushed with faint rose, their peaks, white and solemn, vast columns of white smoke ascended. It was as though volcanic fires had once again broken their long stillness. Then we saw what it was: the north wind (unheard, unfelt, where we stood) blew a hurricane against the other side of the peaks, and, striking upon the leagues of hard snow, drove it upward like smoke, till the columns rose gigantic and hung between the silence of the white peaks and the silence of the stars.

That night, with the sea breaking less than a score yards from where I lay, I slept, though for three nights I had not been able to sleep. When I woke, my trouble was gone.

It was but a reminder to me. But to others it was more than that.

I remember that winter for another thing, which I may write of here.

From the fisherman's wife with whom I lodged I learned that her daughter had recently borne a son, but was now up and about

again, though for the first time, that morning. We went to her, about noon. She was not in the house. A small cabbage-garden lay behind, and beyond it the mossy edge of a wood of rowans and birches broke steeply in bracken and lonroid. The girl was there, and had taken the child from her breast, and kneeling, was touching the earth with the small lint-white head.

I asked her what she was doing. She said it was the right thing to do; that as soon as possible after the child was born, the mother should take it—and best, at noon, and facing the sun—and touch its brow to the earth. My friends (like many islanders of the Inner Hebrides, they had no Gaelic) used an unfamiliar phrase; "It's the old Mothering." It was, in truth, the sacrament of Our Mother, but in a far ancient sense. I do not doubt the rite is among the most primitive of those practised by the Celtic peoples.

I have not seen it elsewhere, though I have heard of it. Probably it is often practised yet in remote places. Even where we were, the women were somewhat fearful lest "the minister" heard of what the young mother had done. They do not love these beautiful symbolic actions, these "ministers," to whom they are superstitions. This old, pagan,

sacramental earth-rite is, certainly, beautiful. How could one better be blessed, on coming into life, than to have the kiss of that ancient Mother of whom we are all children? There must be wisdom in that first touch. I do not doubt that behind the symbol lies, at times, the old miraculous communication. For, even in this late day, some of us are born with remembrance, with dumb worship, with intimate and uplifting kinship to that Mother.

Since then I have asked often, in many parts of the Highlands and Islands, for what is known of this rite, when and where practised, and what meanings it bears; and some day I hope to put these notes on record. I am convinced that the Earth-Blessing is more ancient than the westward migration of the Celtic peoples.

I have both read and heard of another custom, though I have not known of it at first-hand. The last time I was told of it was of a crofter and his wife in North Uist. The once general custom is remembered in a familiar Gaelic saying, the English of which is, "He got a turn through the smoke." After baptism, a child was taken from the breast, and handed by its mother (sometimes the child was placed in a basket) to the

father, across the fire. I do not think, but am not sure, if any signal meaning lie in the mother handing the child to the father. When the rite is spoken of, as often as not it is only "the parents" that the speaker alludes to. The rite is universally recognised as a spell against the dominion, or agency, of evil spirits. In Coll and Tiree, it is to keep the Hidden People from touching or singing to the child. I think it is an ancient propitiatory rite, akin to that which made our ancestors touch the new-born to earth; as that which makes some islanders still baptize a child with a little spray from the running wave, or a fingerful of water from the tide at the flow; as that which made an old woman lift me as a little child and hold me up to the south wind, "to make me strong and fair and always young, and to keep back death and sorrow, and to keep me safe from other winds and evil spirits." Old Barabal has gone where the south wind blows, in blossom and flowers and green leaves, across the pastures of Death; and I . . . alas, I can but wish that One stronger than she, for all her love, will lift me, as a child again, to the Wind, and pass me across the Fire, and set me down again upon a new Earth.

# FROM "GREEN FIRE"

*Be not troubled in the inward Hope. It lives in beauty, and the hand of God slowly wakens it year by year, and through the many ways of Sorrow. It is an Immortal, and its name is Joy.*

F. M.

# The Herdsman

On the night when Alan Carmichael with his old servant and friend, Ian M'Ian, arrived in Balnaree ("Baile'-na-Righ"), the little village wherein was all that Borosay had to boast of in the way of civic life, he could not disguise from himself that he was regarded askance.

Rightly or wrongly, he took this to be resentment because of his having wed (alas, he recalled, wed and lost) the daughter of the man who had killed Ailean Carmichael in a duel. So possessed was he by this idea, that he did not remember how little likely the islanders were to know anything of him or his beyond the fact that Ailean MacAlasdair Rhona had died abroad.

The trouble became more than an imaginary one when, on the morrow, he tried to find a boat for the passage to Rona. But for the Frozen Hand, as the triple-peaked hill to the south of Balnaree was called, Rona

would have been visible; nor was it, with a fair wind, more than an hour's sail distant.

Nevertheless, he could detect in every one to whom he spoke a strange reluctance. At last he asked an old man of his own surname why there was so much difficulty.

In the island way, Seumas Carmichael replied that the people on Elleray, the island adjacent to Rona, were unfriendly.

"But unfriendly at what?"

"Well, at this and at that. But for one thing, they are not having any dealings with the Carmichaels. They are all Macneills there, Macneills of Barra. There is a feud, I am thinking; though I know nothing of it; no, not I."

"But Seumas mac Eachainn, you know well yourself that there are almost no Carmichaels to have a feud with! There are you and your brother, and there is your cousin over at Sgòrr-Bhan on the other side of Borosay. Who else is there?"

To this the man could say nothing. Distressed, Alan sought Ian and bade him find out what he could. He also was puzzled and uneasy. That some evil was at work could not be doubted, and that it was secret boded ill.

Ian was a stranger in Borosay because of his absence since boyhood ; but, after all, Ian mac Iain mhic Dhonuill was to the islanders one of themselves ; and though he came there with a man under a shadow (though this phrase was not used in Ian's hearing), that was not his fault.

And when he reminded them that for these many years he had not seen the old woman, his sister Giorsal ; and spoke of her, and of their long separation, and of his wish to see her again before he died, there was no more hesitation, but only kindly willingness to help.

Within an hour a boat was ready to take the homefarers to the Isle of Caves, as Rona is sometimes called. Before the hour was gone, they, with the stores of food and other things, were slipping seaward out of Borosay Haven.

The moment the headland was rounded, the heights of Rona came into view. Great gaunt cliffs they are, precipices of black basalt ; though on the south side they fall away in grassy declivities which hang a greenness over the wandering wave for ever sobbing round that desolate shore. But it was not till the Sgòrr-Dhu, a conical black rock at the south-east end of the island, was reached, that

the stone keep, known as Caisteal-Rhona, came in sight.

It stands at the landward extreme of a rocky ledge, on the margin of a green *àiridh.* Westward is a small dark-blue sea loch, no more than a narrow haven. To the north-west rise precipitous cliffs; northward, above the green pasture and a stretch of heather, is a woodland belt of some three or four hundred pine-trees. It well deserves its poetic name of I-monair, as Aodh the Islander sang of it; for it echoes ceaselessly with wind and wave. If the waves dash against it from the south or east, a loud crying is upon the faces of the rocks; if from the north or north-east, there are unexpected inland silences, but amid the pines a continual voice. It is when the wind blows from the south-west, or the huge Atlantic billows surge out of the west, that Rona is given over to an indescribable tumult. Through the whole island goes the myriad echo of a continuous booming; and within this a sound as though waters were pouring through vast hidden conduits in the heart of every precipice, every rock, every boulder. This is because of the sea-arcades of which it consists, for from the westward the island has been honeycombed by the waves. No living man has ever traversed all those mysterious, winding sea-

galleries. Many have perished in the attempt. In the olden days the Uisteans and Barrovians sought refuge there from the marauding Danes and other pirates out of Lochlin; and in the time when the last Scottish king took shelter in the west, many of his island followers found safety among these perilous arcades.

Some of them reach an immense height. These are filled with a pale green gloom which in fine weather, and at noon or toward sundown, becomes almost radiant. But most have only a dusky green obscurity, and some are at all times dark with a darkness that has seen neither sun nor moon nor star for unknown ages. Sometimes, there, a phosphorescent wave will spill a livid or a cold blue flame, and for a moment a vast gulf of dripping basalt be revealed; but day and night, night and day, from year to year, from age to age, that awful wave-clamant darkness is unbroken.

To the few who know some of the secrets of the passages, it is possible, except when a gale blows from any quarter but the north, to thread these dim arcades in a narrow boat, and so to pass from the Hebrid Seas to the outer Atlantic. But for the unwary there might well be no return; for in that maze

of winding galleries and sea-washed, shadowy arcades, confusion is but another name for death. Once bewildered, there is no hope; and the lost adventurer will remain there idly drifting from barren passage to passage, till he perish of hunger and thirst, or, maddened by the strange and appalling gloom and the unbroken silence—for there the muffled voice of the sea is no more than a whisper—leap into the green waters which for ever slide stealthily from ledge to ledge.

Now, as Alan approached his remote home, he thought of these death-haunted corridors, avenues of the grave, as they are called in the "Cumha Fhir-Mearanach Aonghas mhic Dhonuill"—the Lament of mad Angus Macdonald

When at last the unwieldy brown coble sailed into the little haven, it was to create unwonted excitement among the few fishermen who put in there frequently for bait. A group of eight or ten was upon the rocky ledge beyond Caisteal-Rhona, among them the elderly woman who was sister to Ian mac Iain.

At Alan's request, Ian went ashore in advance in a small punt. He was to wave his hand if all were well, for Alan could not

but feel apprehensive on account of the strange ill-will that had shown itself at Borosay.

It was with relief that he saw the signal when, after Ian had embraced his sister, and shaken hands with all the fishermen, he had explained that the son of Ailean Carmichael was come out of the south, and had come to live a while at Caisteal-Rhona.

All there uncovered and waved their hats. Then a shout of welcome went up, and Alan's heart was glad. But the moment he had set foot on land he saw a startled look come into the eyes of the fishermen—a look that deepened swiftly into one of aversion, almost of fear.

One by one the men moved away, awkward in their embarrassment. Not one came forward with outstretched hand, or said a word of welcome.

At first amazed, then indignant, Ian reproached them. They received his words in shamed silence. Even when with a bitter tongue he taunted them, they answered nothing.

"Giorsal," said Ian, turning in despair to his sister, "is it madness that you have?"

But even she was no longer the same. Her eyes were fixed upon Alan with a look of

dread, and indeed of horror. It was unmistakable, and Alan himself was conscious of it with a strange sinking of the heart. "Speak, woman!" he demanded. "What is the meaning of this thing? Why do you and these men look at me askance?"

"God forbid!" answered Giorsal Macdonald with white lips; "God forbid that we look at the son of Ailean Carmichael askance. But——"

"But what?"

With that the woman put her apron over her head and moved away, muttering strange words.

"Ian, what is this mystery?"

"How am I for knowing, Alan mac Ailean? It is all a darkness to me also. But I will be finding that out soon."

That, however, was easier for Ian to say than to do. Meanwhile, the brown coble tacked back to Borosay, and the fisherman sailed away to the Barra coasts, and Alan and Ian were left solitary in their wild and remote home.

But in that very solitude Alan found healing. From what Giorsal hinted, he came to believe that the fishermen had experienced one of those strange dream-waves which, in remote isles, occur at times, when whole

communities will be wrought by the self-same fantasy. When day by day went past, and no one came near, he at first was puzzled, and even resentful; but this passed, and soon he was glad to be alone. Ian, however, knew that there was another cause for the inexplicable aversion that had been shown. But he was silent, and kept a patient watch for the hour that the future held in its shroud. As for Giorsal, she was dumb; but no more looked at Alan askance.

And so the weeks went. Occasionally a fishing smack came with the provisions, for the weekly despatch of which Alan had arranged at Loch Boisdale, and sometimes the Barra men put in at the haveu, though they would never stay long, and always avoided Alan as much as was possible.

In that time Alan and Ian came to know and love their strangely beautiful island home. Hours and hours at a time they spent exploring the dim, green, winding sea-galleries, till at last they knew the chief arcades thoroughly.

They had even ventured into some of the narrow, snake-like inner passages, but never for long, because of the awe and dread these held, silent estuaries of the grave.

Week after week passed, and to Alan it

was as the going of the grey owl's wing, swift and silent.

Then it was that, on a day of the days, he was suddenly stricken with a new and startling dread.

## II

In the hour that this terror came upon him Alan was alone upon the high slopes of Rona, where the grass fails and the lichen yellows at close on a thousand feet above the sea.

The day had been cloudless since sunrise. The sea was as the single vast petal of an azure flower, all of one unbroken blue save for the shadows of the scattered isles and the slow-drifting mauve or purple of floating weed. Countless birds congregated from every quarter. Guillemots and puffins, cormorants and northern divers, everywhere darted, swam, or slept upon the listless ocean, whose deep breathing no more than lifted a league-long calm here and there, to lapse breathlike as it rose. Through the not less silent quietudes of air the grey skuas swept with curving flight, and the narrow-winged terns made a constant white shimmer. At re-

mote altitudes the gannet motionlessly drifted. Oceanward the great widths of calm were rent now and again by the shoulders of the porpoises which followed the herring trail, their huge, black, revolving bodies looming large above the silent wave. Not a boat was visible anywhere; not even upon the most distant horizons did a brown sail fleck itself duskily against the skyward wall of steely blue.

In the great stillness which prevailed, the noise of the surf beating around the promontory of Aonaig was audible as a whisper; though even in that windless hour the confused rumour of the sea, moving through the arcades of the island, filled the hollow of the air overhead. Ever since the early morning Alan had moved under a strange gloom. Out of that golden glory of midsummer a breath of joyous life should have reached his heart, but it was not so. For sure, there is sometimes in the quiet beauty of summer an air of menace, a premonition of suspended force—a force antagonistic and terrible, All who have lived in these lonely isles know the peculiar intensity of this summer melancholy. No noise of wind, no prolonged season of untimely rains, no long baffling of mists in all the drear inclemencies of that remote region, can produce the same ominous and even para-

lysing gloom sometimes born of ineffable peace and beauty. Is it that in the human soul there is a mysterious kinship with the outer soul which we call Nature; and that in these few supreme hours which come at the full of the year, we are, sometimes, suddenly aware of the tremendous forces beneath and behind us, momently quiescent?

Determined to shake off this dejection, Alan wandered high among the upland solitudes. There a cool air moved always, even in the noons of August; and there, indeed, often had come upon him a deep peace. But whatsoever the reason, only a deeper despondency possessed him. An incident, significant in that mood, at that time, happened then. A few hundred yards away from where he stood, half hidden in a little glen where a fall of water tossed its spray among the shadows of rowan and birch, was the bothie of a woman, the wife of Neil MacNeill, a fisherman of Aoinaig. She was there, he knew, for the summer pasturing; and even as he recollected this, he heard the sound of her voice as she sang somewhere by the burnside. Moving slowly toward the corrie, he stopped at a mountain ash which over hung a pool. Looking down, he saw the woman, Morag

MacNeill, washing and peeling potatoes in the clear brown water. And as she washed and peeled, she sang an old-time shealing hymn of the Virgin-Shepherdess, of Michael the White, and of Columan the Dove. It was a song that, years ago, far away in Brittany. he had heard from his mother's lips. He listened now to every word of the doubly familiar Gaelic; and when Morag ended, the tears were in his eyes, and he stood for a while as one under a spell [1]

"A Mhicheil mhin! nan steud geala,
A choisin cios air Dragon fala,
Air ghaol Dia 'us Mhic Muire,
Sgaoil do sgiath oirnn dian sinn uile,
Sgaoil do sgiath oirnn dian sinn uile.

"A Mhoire ghradhach! Mathair Uain-ghil,
Cobhair oirnne, Oigh na h-uaisle;
A rioghainn uai'reach! a bhuachaille nan treud!
Cum ar cuallach cuartaich sinn le cheil,
Cum ar cuallach cuartaich sinn le cheil.

"A Chalum-Chille: chairdeil, chaoimh,
An ainm Athar, Mic, 'us Spioraid Naoimh,
Trid na Trithinn! trid na Triath!
Comraig sinne, gleidh ar trial,
Comraig sinne, gleidh ar trial.

[1] This hymn was taken down in the Gaelic and translated by Mr. Alexander Carmichael of South Uist.

Athair! A Mhic! A Spioraid Naoimh!
Bi'eadh an Tri-Aon leinn, a la's a dh-oidhche!
'S air chul nan tonn, no air thaobh nan beann,
Bi'dh ar Mathair leinn, 's bith a lamh fo'r ceann,
Bi'dh ar Mathair leinn, 's bith a lamh fo'r ceann.

Thou gentle Michael of the white steed,
Who subdued the Dragon of blood,
For love of God and the Son of Mary,
Spread over us thy wing, shield us all!
Spread over us thy wing, shield us all!

Mary beloved! Mother of the White Lamb,
Protect us, thou Virgin of nobleness,
Queen of beauty! Shepherdess of the flocks!
Keep our cattle, surround us together,
Keep our cattle, surround us together.

Thou Columba, the friendly, the kind,
In name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit Holy,
Through the Three-in-One, through the Three,
Encompass us, guard our procession,
Encompass us, guard our procession.

Thou Father! thou Son! thou Spirit Holy!
Be the Three-in-One with us day and night.
And on the crested wave, or on the mountain side.
Our Mother is there, and her arm is under our head,
Our Mother is there, and her arm is under our head."

Alan found himself repeating whisperingly, and again and again—

"Bi 'eadh an Tri-Aon leinn, a la's a dh-oidhche!
'S air chul nan tonn, no air thaobh nam beann."

Suddenly the woman glanced upward, perhaps because of the shadow that moved against the green bracken below. With a startled gesture she sprang to her feet. Alan looked at her kindly, saying, with a smile, "Sure, Morag nic Tormod, it is not fear you need be having of one who is your friend." Then, seeing that the woman stared at him with something of terror as well as surprise, he spoke to her again.

"Sure, Morag, I am no stranger that you should be looking at me with those foreign eyes." He laughed as he spoke, and made as though he were about to descend to the burnside. Unmistakably, however, the woman did not desire his company. He saw this, with the pain and bewilderment which had come upon him whenever the like happened, as so often it had happened since he had come to Rona.

"Tell me, Morag MacNeill, what is the meaning of this strangeness that is upon you? Why do you not speak? Why do you turn away your head?"

Suddenly the woman flashed her black eyes upon him.

"Have you ever heard of *am Buachaill Bàn—am Buachaill Buidhe?*"

He looked at her in amaze. *Am Buachaill Bàn!* . . . The fair-haired Herdsman, the yellow-haired Herdsman! What could she mean? In days gone by, he knew, the islanders, in the evil time after Culloden, had so named the fugitive Prince who had sought shelter in the Hebrides; and in some of the runes of an older day still the Saviour of the World was sometimes so called, just as Mary was called *Bhuachaile nan treud*—Shepherdess of the Flock. But it could be no allusion to either of these that was intended.

"Who is the Herdsman of whom you speak, Morag?"

"Is it no knowledge you have of him at all, Alan MacAilean?"

"None. I know nothing of the man, nothing of what is in your mind. Who is the Herdsman?"

"You will not be putting evil upon me because that you saw me here by the pool before I saw you?"

"Why should I, woman? Why do you think that I have the power of the evil eye? Sure, I have done no harm to you or yours, and wish none. But if it is for peace to you to know it, it is no evil I wish

you, but only good. The Blessing of Himself be upon you and yours and upon your house!"

The woman looked relieved, but still cast her furtive gaze upon Alan, who no longer attempted to join her.

"I cannot be speaking the thing that is in my mind, Alan MacAilean. It is not for me to be saying that thing. But if you have no knowledge of the Herdsman, sure it is only another wonder of the wonders, and God has the sun on that shadow, to the Stones be it said."

"But tell me, Morag, who is the Herdsman of whom you speak?"

For a minute or more the woman stood regarding him intently. Then slowly, and with obvious reluctance, she spoke—

"Why have you appeared to the people upon the isles, sometimes by moonlight, sometimes by day or in the dusk, and have foretold upon one and all who dwell here black gloom and the red flame of sorrow? Why have you, who are an outcast because of what lies between you and another, pretended to be a messenger of the Son—ay, for sure, even, God forgive you, to be the Son Himself?"

Alan stared at the woman. For a time he

could utter no word. Had some extraordinary delusion spread among the islanders, and was there in the insane accusation of this woman the secret of that which had so troubled him?

"This is all an empty darkness to me, Morag. Speak more plainly, woman. What is all this madness that you say? When have I spoken of having any mission, or of being other than I am? When have I foretold evil upon you or yours, or upon the isles beyond? What man has ever dared to say that Alan MacAilean of Rona is an outcast? And what sin is it that lies between me and another of which you know?"

It was impossible for Morag MacNeill to doubt the sincerity of the man who spoke to her. She crossed herself, and muttered the words of a *seun* for the protection of the soul against the demon powers. Still, even while she believed in Alan's sincerity, she could not reconcile it with that terrible and strange mystery with which rumour had filled her ears. So, having nothing to say in reply to his eager questions, she cast down her eyes and kept silence.

"Speak, Morag, for Heaven's sake! Speak if you are a true woman; you that see a man in sore pain, in pain, too, for that of which

he knows nothing, and of the ill of which he is guiltless!"

But, keeping her face averted, the woman muttered simply, "I have no more to say." With that she turned and moved slowly along the pathway which led from the pool to her hillside bothie.

With a sigh, Alan walked slowly away. What wonder, he thought, that deep gloom had been upon him that day? Here, in the woman's mysterious words, was the shadow of that shadow.

Slowly, brooding deep over what he had heard, he crossed the Monadh-nan-Con, as the hill-tract there was called, till he came to the rocky wilderness known as the Slope of the Caverns.

There for a time he leaned against a high boulder, idly watching a few sheep nibbling the short grass which grew about some of the many caves which opened in slits or wide hollows. Below and beyond he saw the pale blue silence of the sea meet the pale blue silence of the sky; south-westward, the grey film of the coast of Ulster; westward, again the illimitable vast of sea and sky, infinitudes of calm, as though the blue silence of heaven breathed in that one motionless wave, as though that wave sighed and drew the horizons

to its heart. From where he stood he could hear the murmur of the surge whispering all round the isle ; the surge that, even on days of profound stillness, makes a murmurous rumour among the rocks and shingle of the island shores. Not upon the moor-side, but in the blank hollows of the caves around him, he heard, as in gigantic shells, the moving of a strange and solemn rhythm : wave-haunted shells indeed, for the echo that was bruited from one to the other came from beneath, from out of those labyrinthine passages and dim, shadowy sea-arcades, where among the melancholy green glooms the Atlantic waters lose themselves in a vain wandering.

For long he leaned there, revolving in his mind the mystery of Morag MacNeill's words. Then, abruptly, the stillness was broken by the sound of a dislodged stone. So little did he expect the foot of fellow-man, that he did not turn at what he thought to be the slip of a sheep. But when upon the slope of the grass, a little way beyond where he stood, a dusky blue shadow wavered fantastically, he swung round with a sudden instinct of dread.

And this was the dread which, after these long weeks since he had come to Rona, was upon Alan Carmichael.

For there, standing quietly by another boulder, at the mouth of another cave, was a man in all appearance identical with himself. Looking at this apparition, he beheld one of the same height as himself, with hair of the same hue, with eyes the same and features the same, with the same carriage, the same smile, the same expression. No, there, and there alone, was any difference.

Sick at heart, Alan wondered if he looked upon his own wraith. Familiar with the legends of his people, it would have been no strange thing to him that there, upon the hillside, should appear the wraith of himself. Had not old Ian McIain—and that, too, though far away in a strange land—seen the death of his mother moving upward from her feet to her knees, from her knees to her waist, from her waist to her neck, and, just before the end, how the shroud darkened along the face until it hid the eyes? Had he not often heard from her, from Ian, of the second self which so often appears beside the living when already the shadow of doom is upon him whose hours are numbered? Was this, then, the reason of what had been his inexplicable gloom? Was he indeed at the extreme of life? Was his soul amid shallows, already a rock upon a blank, inhospitable

shore? If not, who or what was this second self which leaned there negligently, looking at him with scornful smiling lips, but with intent, unsmiling eyes.

Slowly there came into his mind this thought: How could a phantom, that was itself intangible, throw a shadow upon the grass, as though it were a living body? Sure, a shadow there was indeed. It lay between the apparition and himself. A legend heard in boyhood came back to him; instinctively he stooped and lifted a stone and flung it midway into the shadow.

"Go back into the darkness," he cried, "if out of the darkness you came; but if you be a living thing, put out your hands!"

The shadow remained motionless. When Alan looked again at his second self, he saw that the scorn which had been upon the lips was now in the eyes also. Ay, for sure, scornful silent laughter it was that lay in those cold wells of light. No phantom that; a man he, even as Alan himself. His heart pulsed like that of a trapped bird, but with the spoken word his courage came back to him.

"Who are you?" he asked, in a voice strange even in his own ears.

"*Am Buachaill*," replied the man in a voice as low and strange. "I am the Herdsman."

A new tide of fear surged in upon Alan. That voice, was it not his own? that tone, was it not familiar in his ears? When the man spoke, he heard himself speak; sure, if he were *Am Buachaill Bàn*, Alan, too, was the Herdsman, though what fantastic destiny might be his was all unknown to him.

"Come near," said the man, and now the mocking light in his eyes was wild as cloud-fire—"come near, oh *Buachaill Bàn!*"

With a swift movement, Alan sprang forward; but as he leaped, his foot caught in a spray of heather, and he stumbled and fell. When he rose, he looked in vain for the man who had called him. There was not a sign, not a trace of any living being. For the first few moments he believed it had all been a delusion. Mortal being did not appear and vanish in that ghostly way. Still, surely he could not have mistaken the blank of that place for a speaking voice, or out of nothingness have fashioned the living phantom of himself? Or could he? With that, he strode forward and peered into the wide arch of the cavern by which the man had stood. He could not see far into it; but so far as it was possible to see, he discerned neither man nor shadow of man, nor anything that stirred; no, not even the gossamer bloom of a beàrnan-

bride, that grew on a patch of grass a yard or two within the darkness, had lost one of its delicate filmy spires. He drew back, dismayed. Then, suddenly, his heart leaped again, for beyond all question, all possible doubt, there, in the bent thyme, just where the man had stood, was the imprint of his feet. Even now the green sprays were moving forward.

## III

An hour passed, and Alan Carmichael had not moved from the entrance to the cave. So still was he that a ewe, listlessly wandering in search of cooler grass, lay down after a while, drowsily regarding him with her amber-coloured eyes. All his thought was upon the mystery of what he had seen. No delusion this, he was sure. That was a man whom he had seen. But who could he be? On so small an island, inhabited by less than a score of crofters, it was scarcely possible for one to live for many weeks and not know the name and face of every soul. Still, a stranger might have come. Only, if this were so, why should he call himself the Herdsman? There was but one herdsman on Rona and he Angus MacCormic, who lived at Einaval on the

north side. In these outer isles, the shepherd and the herdsman are appointed by the community, and no man is allowed to be one or the other at will, any more than to be a *maor*. Then, too, if this man were indeed herdsman, where was his *iomair ionailtair*, his browsing tract? Looking round him, Alan could perceive nowhere any fitting pasture. Surely no herdsman would be content with such an *iomair a bhuachaill*—rig of the herdsman—as that rocky wilderness where the soft green grass grew in patches under this or that boulder, on the sun side of this or that rocky ledge. Again, he had given no name, but called himself simply *Am Buachaill*. This was how the woman Morag had spoken; did she indeed mean this very man? and if so, what lay in her words? But far beyond all other bewilderment for him was that strange, that indeed terrifying likeness to himself—a likeness so absolute, so convincing, that he knew he might himself easily have been deceived, had he beheld the apparition in any place where it was possible that a reflection could have misled him.

Brooding thus, eye and ear were both alert for the faintest sight or sound. But from the interior of the cavern not a breath came. Once, from among the jagged rocks high on

the west slope of Ben Einaval, he fancied he heard an unwonted sound—that of human laughter, but laughter so wild, so remote, so unmirthful, that fear was in his heart. It could not be other than imagination, he said to himself; for in that lonely place there was none to wander idly at that season, and none who, wandering, would laugh there solitary.

It was with an effort that Alan at last determined to probe the mystery. Stooping, he moved cautiously into the cavern, and groped his way along the narrow passage which led, as he thonght, into another larger cave. But this proved to be one of the innumerable blind ways which intersect the honeycombed slopes of the Isle of Caves. To wander far in these lightless passages would be to track death. Long ago the piper whom the Prionnsa-Bàn, the Fair Prince, loved to hear in his exile—he that was called Rory M'Vurich—penetrated one of the larger hollows to seek there for a child that had idly wandered into the dark. Some of the clansmen, with the father and mother of the little one, waited at the entrance to the cave. For a time there was silence; then, as agreed upon, the sound of the pipes was heard, to which a man named Lachlan M'Lachlan replied from the outer air. The skirl of the pipes within grew

fainter and fainter. Louder and louder Lachlan played upon his chanter; deeper and deeper grew the wild moaning of the drone; but for all that, fainter and fainter waned the sound of the pipes of Rory M'Vurich. Generations have come and gone upon the isle, and still no man has heard the returning air which Rory was to play. He may have found the little child, but he never found his backward path, and in the gloom of that honeycombed hill he and the child and the music of the pipes lapsed into the same stillness. Remembering this legend, familiar to him since his boyhood, Alan did not dare to venture further. At any moment, too, he knew he might fall into one of the crevices which opened into the sea-corridors hundreds of feet below. Ancient rumour had it that there were mysterious passages from the upper heights of Ben Einaval which led into the heart of this perilous maze. But for a time he lay still, straining every sense. Convinced at last that the man whom he sought had evaded all possible quest, he turned to regain the light. Brief way as he had gone, this was no easy thing to do. For a few moments, indeed, Alan lost his self-possession when he found a uniform dusk about him, and could not discern which of the several branching

narrow corridors was that by which he had come. But following the greener light, he reached the cave, and soon, with a sigh of relief, was upon the sun-sweet warm earth again.

How more than ever beautiful the world seemed! how sweet to the eyes were upland and cliff, the wide stretch of ocean, the flying birds, the sheep grazing on the scanty pastures, and, above all, the homely blue smoke curling faintly upward from the fisher crofts on the headland east of Aonaig!

Purposely he retraced his steps by the way of the glen: he would see the woman Morag MacNeill again, and insist on some more explicit word. But when he reached the burnside once more, the woman was not there. Possibly she had seen him coming, and guessed his purpose; half he surmised this, for the peats in the hearth were brightly aglow, and on the hob beside them the boiling water hissed in a great iron pot wherein were potatoes. In vain he sought, in vain called. Impatient, he walked around the bothie and into the little byre beyond. The place was deserted. This, small matter as it was, added to his disquietude. Resolved to sift the mystery, he walked swiftly down the slope. By the old shealing of Cnoc-na-Monie, now

forsaken, his heart leaped at sight of Ian coming to meet him.

When they met, Alan put his hands lovingly on the old man's shoulders, and looked at him with questioning eyes. He found rest and hope in those deep pools of quiet light, whence the faithful love rose comfortingly to meet his own yearning gaze.

"What is it, Alan-mo-ghray; what is the trouble that is upon you?"

"It is a trouble, Ian, but one of which I can speak little, for it is little I know."

"Now, now, for sure you must tell me what it is."

"I have seen a man here upon Rona whom I have not seen or met before, and it is one whose face is known to me, and whose voice too, and one whom I would not meet again."

"Did he give you no name?"

"None."

"Where did he come from? Where did he go to?"

"He came out of the shadow, and into the shadow he went."

Ian looked steadfastly at Alan, his wistful gaze searching deep into his unquiet eyes, and thence from feature to feature of the face which had become strangely worn of late.

But he questioned no further.

"I, too, Alan MacAilean, have heard a strange thing to-day. You know old Marsail Macrae? She is ill now with a slow fever, and she thinks that the shadow which she saw lying upon her hearth last Sabbath, when nothing was there to cause any shadow, was her own death, come for her, and now waiting there. I spoke to the old woman, but she would not have peace, and her eyes looked at me.'

"'What will it be now, Marsail?' I asked.

"'Ay, ay, for sure,' she said, 'it was I who saw you first.'

"'Saw me first, Marsail?'

"'Ay, you and Alan MacAilean.'

"'When and where was this sight upon you?'

"'It was one month before you and he came to Rona.'

"I asked the poor old woman to be telling me her meaning. At first I could make little of what was said, for she muttered low, and moved her head this way and that, and moaned like a stricken ewe. But on my taking her hand, she looked at me again, and then told me this thing—

"'On the seventh day of the month before you came—and by the same token it was on the seventh day of the month following that

you and Alan McAilean came to Caisteal-Rhona—I was upon the shore at Aonaig, listening to the crying of the wind against the great cliff of Biola-creag. With me were Ruaridh Macrae and Neil MacNeill, Morag MacNeill, and her sister Elsa; and we were singing the hymn for those who were out on the wild sea that was roaring white against the cliffs of Berneray, for some of our people were there, and we feared for them. Sometimes one sang, and sometimes another. And sure, it is remembering I am, how, when I had called out with my old wailing voice—

"'Bi 'eadh an Tri-aon leinn, a la's a dh-oidche;
'S air chul nan tonn, A Mhoire ghradhach!

(Be the Three-in-One with us day and night;
And on the crested wave, O Mary Beloved!)

"'Now when I had just sung this, and we were all listening to the sound of it caught by the wind and blown up against the black face of Biola-creag, I saw a boat come sailing into the haven. I called out to those about me, but they looked at me with white faces, for no boat was there, and it was a rough, wild sea it was in that haven.

"'And in that boat I saw three people sitting;

and one was you, Ian MacIain, and one was a man who had his face in shadow, and his eyes looked into the shadow at his feet. I saw you clear, and told those about me what I saw. And Seumas MacNeill, him that is dead now, and brother to Neil here at Aonaig, he said to me, "Who was that whom you saw walking in the dusk the night before last?"—"Ailean MacAlasdair Carmichael," answered one at that. Seumas muttered, looking at those about him, "Mark what I say, for it is a true thing—that Ailean Carmichael of Rona is dead now, because Marsail saw him walking in the dusk when he was not upon the island; and now, you Neil, and you Rory, and all of you, will be for thinking with me that one of the men in the boat whom Marsail sees now will be the son of him who has changed."

"Well, well, it is a true thing that we each of us thought that thought, but when the days went and nothing more came of it, the memory of the seeing went too. Then there came the day when the coble of Aulay MacAulay came out of Borosay into Caisteal-Rhona haven. Glad we were to see your face again, Ian McIain, and to hear the sob of joy coming out of the heart of Giorsal your sister; but when you and Alan MacAilean came

on shore, it was my voice that then went from mouth to mouth, for I whispered to Morag MacNeill who was next me that you were the men I had seen in the boat.'

"Well, after that," Ian added, with a grave smile, "I spoke gently to old Marsail, and told her that there was no evil in that seeing, and that for sure it was nothing at all, at all, to see two people in a boat, and nothing coming of that, save happiness for those two, and glad content to be here.

"Marsail looked at me with big eyes.

"But when I asked her what she meant by that, she would say no more. No asking of mine would bring the word to her lips, only she shook her head and kept her gaze from my face. Then, seeing that it was useless, I said to her—

"'Marsail, tell me this: Was this sight of yours the sole thing that made the people here on Rona look askance at Alan MacAilean?'

"For a time she stared at me with dim eyes, then suddenly she spoke—

"'It is not all.'

"'Then what more is there, Marsail Macrae?'

"'That is not for the saying. I have no more to say. Let you, or Alan MacAilean,

go elsewhere. That which is to be, will be. To each his own end.'

"'Then be telling me this now at least,' I asked: 'is there danger for him or me in this island?'

"But the poor old woman would say no more, and then I saw a swoon was on her."

After this, Alan and Ian walked slowly home together, both silent, and each revolving in his mind as in a dim dusk that mystery which, vague and unreal at first, had now become a living presence, and haunted them by day and night.

## IV

"In the shadow of pain, one may hear the footsteps of joy." So runs a proverb of old.

It was a true saying for Alan. That night he lay down in pain, his heart heavy with the weight of a mysterious burden. On the morrow he woke blithely to a new day—a day of absolute beauty. The whole wide wilderness of ocean was of living azure, aflame with gold and silver. Around the promontories of the isles the brown-sailed fishing-boats of Barra and Berneray, of Borosay and Seila, moved blithely hither and thither. Every-

where the rhythm of life pulsed swift and strong. The first sound which had awakened Alan was of a loud singing of fishermen who were putting out from Aonaig. The coming of a great shoal of mackerel had been signalled, and every man and woman of the near isles was alert for the take. The watchers had known it by the swift congregation of birds, particularly the gannets and skuas. And as the men pulled at the oars, or hoisted the brown sails, they sang a snatch of an old-world tune, still chanted at the first coming of the birds when spring-tide is on the flow again—

"Bui' cheas dha 'n Ti thaine na Gugachan
Thaine's na h-Eoin-Mhora cuideriu,
Cailin dugh ciaru bo's a chro¡
Bo dhonn! bo dhonn! bo dhonn bheadarrach!
Bo dhonn a ruin a bhlitheadh am baine dhuit
Ho ro! mo gheallag! ni gu rodagach!
Cailin dugh ciaru bo's a chro—
Na h-eoin air tighinn! cluinneam an ceol!"

(Thanks to the Being, the Gannets have come,
Yes! and the Great Auks along with them.
Dark-haired girl!—a cow in the fold!
Brown cow! brown cow! brown cow, beloved ho!
Brown cow! my love! the milker of milk to thee!
Ho ro! my fair-skinned girl—a cow, in the fold,
And the birds have come!—glad sight, I see!)

Eager to be of help, Ian put off in his boat, and was soon among the fishermen, who in their new excitement were forgetful of all else than that the mackerel were come, and that every moment was precious. For the first time Ian found himself no unwelcome comrade. Was it, he wondered, because that, there upon the sea, whatever of shadow dwelled about him, or rather about Alan MacAilean, on the land, was no longer visible.

All through that golden noon he and the others worked hard. From isle to isle went the chorus of the splashing oars and splashing nets; of the splashing of the fish and the splashing of gannets and gulls; of the splashing of the tide leaping blithely against the sun-dazzle, and the illimitable rippling splash moving out of the west;—all this blent with the loud, joyous cries, the laughter, and the hoarse shouts of the men of Barra and the adjacent islands. It was close upon dusk before the Rona boats put into the haven of Aonaig again; and by that time none was blither than Ian MacIain, who in that day of happy toil had lost all the gloom and apprehension of the day before, and now returned to Caisteal-Rhona with lighter heart than he had known for long.

When, however, he got there, there was no sign of Alan. He had gone, said Giorsal, he had gone out in the smaller boat midway in the afternoon, and had sailed around to Aoidhu, the great scaur which ran out beyond the precipices at the south-west of Rona.

This Alan often did, and of late more and more often. Ever since he had come to the Hebrid Isles his love of the sea had deepened and had grown into a passion for its mystery and beauty. Of late, too, something impelled to a more frequent isolation, a deep longing to be where no eye could see and no ear hearken.

So at first Ian was in no way alarmed. But when the sun had set, and over the faint blue film of the Isle of Tiree the moon had risen, and still no sign of Alan, he became restless and uneasy. Giorsal begged him in vain to eat of the supper she had prepared. Idly he moved to and fro along the rocky ledge, or down by the pebbly shore, or across the green *àiridh*, eager for a glimpse of him whom he loved so well.

At last, unable longer to endure a growing anxiety, he put out in his boat, and sailed swiftly before the slight easterly breeze which had prevailed since moonrise. So far as

Aoidhu, all the way from Aonaig, there was not a haven anywhere, nor even one of the sea caverns which honeycombed the isle beyond the headland. A glance, therefore, showed him that Alan had not yet come back that way. It was possible, though unlikely, that he had sailed right round Rona; unlikely, because in the narrow straits to the north, between Rona and the scattered islets known as the Innsemhara, strong currents prevailed, and particularly at the full of the tide, when they swept north-eastward dark and swift as a mill-race.

Once the headland was passed and the sheer precipitous westward cliffs loomed black out of the sea, he became more and more uneasy. As yet, there was no danger; but he saw that a swell was moving out of the west; and whenever the wind blew that way, the sea-arcades were filled with a lifting, perilous wave, Later, escape might be difficult, and often impossible. Out of the score or more great passages which opened between Aoidhu and Ardgorm, it was difficult to know into which to chance the search of Alan. Together they had examined all of them. Some twisted but slightly; others wound sinuously till the green, serpentine alleys, flanked by basalt walls hundreds of

feet high, lost themselves in an indistinguishable maze.

But that which was safest, and wherein a boat could most easily make its way against wind or tide, was the huge, cavernous passage known locally as the Uaimh-nan-roin, the Cave of the Seals.

For this opening Ian steered his boat. Soon he was within the wide corridor. Like the great cave at Staffa, it was wrought as an aisle in some natural cathedral; the rocks, too, were columnar, and rose in flawless symmetry, as though graven by the hand of man. At the far end of this gigantic aisle, there diverges a long, narrow arcade, filled by day with the green shine of the water, and by night, when the moon is up, with a pale froth of light. It is one of the few where there are open gateways for the sea and the wandering light, and by its spherical shape almost the only safe passage in a season of heavy wind. Half-way along this arched arcade a corridor leads to a round cup-like cavern, midway in which stands a huge mass of black basalt, in shape suggestive of a titanic altar. Thus it must have impressed the imagination of the islanders of old; for by them, even in a remote day, it was called Teampull-Mara, the Temple of the Sea. Owing to the narrowness

of the passage, and to the smooth, unbroken walls which rise sheer from the green depths into an invisible darkness, the Strait of the Temple is not one wherein to linger long, save in a time of calm.

Instinctively, however, Ian quietly headed his boat along this narrow way. When, silently, he emerged from the arcade, he could just discern the mass of basalt at the far end of the cavern. But there, seated in his boat, was Alan, apparently idly adrift, for one oar floated in the water alongside, and the other swung listlessly from the tholes.

His heart had a suffocating grip as he saw him whom he had come to seek. Why that absolute stillness, that strange, listless indifference? For a dreadful moment he feared death had indeed come to him in that lonely place where, as an ancient legend had it, a woman of old time had perished, and ever since had wrought death upon any who came thither solitary and unhappy.

But at the striking of the shaft of his oar against a ledge, Alan moved, and looked at him with startled eyes. Half rising from where he crouched in the stern, he called to him in a voice that had in it something strangely unfamiliar.

"I will not hear!" he cried. "I will not hear! Leave me! Leave me!"

Fearing that the desolation of the place had wrought upon his mind, Ian swiftly moved toward him, and the next moment his boat glided alongside. Stepping from the one to the other, he kneeled beside him.

"*Ailean mo caraid, Ailean-aghray*, what is it? What gives you dread? There is no harm here. All is well. Look! See, it is I, Ian—old Ian MacIain! Listen, *mo ghaoil;* do you not know me—do you not know who I am? It is I, Ian; Ian who loves you!"

Even in that obscure light he could clearly discern the pale face, and his heart smote him as he saw Alan's eyes turn upon him with a glance wild and mournful. Had he indeed succumbed to the sea madness which ever and again strikes into a terrible melancholy one here and there among those who dwell in the remote isles? But even as he looked, he noted another expression come into the wild strained eyes; and almost before he realised what had happened, Alan was on his feet and pointing with rigid arm.

For there, in that nigh unreachable and for ever unvisited solitude, was the figure of a man. He stood on the summit of the huge

basalt altar, and appeared to have sprung from out the rock, or, himself a shadowy presence, to have grown out of the obscure unrealities of the darkness. Ian stared, fascinated, speechless.

Then with a spring he was on the ledge. Swift and sure as a wild cat, he scaled the huge mass of the altar.

Nothing; no one! There was not a trace of any human being. Not a bird, not a bat; nothing. Moreover, even in that slowly blackening darkness, he could see that there was no direct connection between the summit or side with the blank, precipitous wall of basalt beyond. Overhead there was, so far as he could discern, a vault. No human being could have descended through that perilous gulf.

Was the island haunted? he wondered, as slowly he made his way back to the boat. Or had he been startled by some wild fantasy, and imagined a likeness where none had been? Perhaps even he had not really seen any one. He had heard of such things. The nerves can soon chase the mind into the shadow wherein it loses itself.

Or was Alan the vain dreamer? That, indeed, might well be. Mayhap he had heard some fantastic tale from Morag MacNeill, or

from old Marsail Macrae; the islanders had *sgeul* after *sgeul* of a wild strangeness.

In silence he guided the boats back into the outer arcade, where a faint sheen of moonlight glistened on the water. Thence, in a few minutes, he oared that wherein he and Alan sat, with the other fastened astern, into the open.

When the moonshine lay full on Alan's face, Ian saw that he was thinking neither of himself nor of where he was. His eyes were heavy with dream.

What wind there was blew against their course, so Ian rowed unceasingly. In silence they passed once again the headland of Aoidhu; in silence they drifted past a single light gleaming in a croft near Aonaig—a red eye staring out into the shadow of the sea, from the room where the woman Marsail lay dying; and in silence their keels grided on the patch of shingle in Caisteal-Rhona haven.

For days thereafter Alan haunted that rocky, cavernous wilderness where he had seen the Herdsman.

It was in vain he had sought everywhere for some tidings of this mysterious dweller in those upland solitudes. At times he believed that there was indeed some one upon

the island of whom, for inexplicable reasons, none there would speak ; but at last he came to the conviction that what he had seen was an apparition, projected by the fantasy of overwrought nerves. Even from the woman Morag MacNeill, to whom he had gone with a frank appeal that won its way to her heart, he learned no more than that an old legend, of which she did not care to speak, was in some way associated with his own coming to Rona.

Ian, too, never once alluded to the mysterious incident of the green arcades which had so deeply impressed them both : never after Alan had told him that he had seen a vision.

But as the days passed, and as no word came to either of any unknown person who was on the island, and as Alan, for all his patient wandering and furtive quest, both among the upland caves and in the green arcades, found absolutely no traces of him whom he sought, the belief that he had been duped by his imagination deepened almost to conviction.

As for Ian, he, unlike Alan, became more and more convinced that what he had seen was indeed no apparition. Whatever lingering doubt he had was dissipated on the eve of the night when old Marsail Macrae died. It was dusk when word came to Caisteal-

Rhona that Marsail felt the cold wind on the soles of her feet. Ian went to her at once, and it was in the dark hour which followed that he heard once more, and more fully, the strange story which, like a poisonous weed, had taken root in the minds of the islanders. Already from Marsail he had heard of the Prophet, though, strangely enough, he had never breathed word of this to Alan, not even when, after the startling episode of the apparition in the Teampull-Mara, he had, as he believed, seen the Prophet himself. But there in the darkness of the low, turfed cottage, with no light in the room save the dull red gloom from the heart of the smoored peats, Marsail, in the attenuated, remote voice of those who have already entered into the vale of the shadow, told him this thing, in the homelier Gaelic—

"Yes, Ian mac Iain-Bàn, I will be telling you this thing before I change. You are for knowing, sure, that long ago Uilleam, brother of him who was father to the lad up at the castle yonder, had a son? Yes, you know that, you say, and also that he was called Donnacha Bàn? No, mo-caraid, that is not a true thing that you have heard, that Donnacha Bàn went under the waves years ago. He was the seventh son, an' was born under the

full moon; 'tis Himself will be knowing whether that was for or against him. Of these seven none lived beyond childhood except the two youngest, Kenneth an' Donnacha. Kenneth was always frail as a February flower, but he lived to be a man. He an' his brother never spoke, for a feud was between them, not only because that each was unlike the other, an' the younger hated the older because through him he was the penniless one, but most because both loved the same woman. I am not for telling you the whole story now, for the breath in my body will soon blow out in the draught that is coming upon me; but this I will say to you: darker and darker grew the gloom between these brothers. When Giorsal Macdonald gave her love to Kenneth, Donnacha disappeared for a time. Then, one day, he came back to Borosay, an' smiled quietly with his cold eyes when they wondered at his coming again. Now, too, it was noticed that he no longer had an ill-will upon his brother, but spoke smoothly with him an' loved to be in his company. But to this day no one knows for sure what happened. For there was a gloaming when Donnacha Bàn came back alone in his sailing-boat. He an' Kenneth had sailed forth, he said, to shoot seals in the sea-arcades to the west of Rona,

but in these dark and lonely passages they had missed each other. At last he had heard Kenneth's voice calling for help, but when he had got to the place it was too late, for his brother had been seized with the cramps, an' had sunk deep into the fathomless water. There is no getting a body again that sinks in these sea-galleries. The crabs know that.

"Well, this and much more was what Donnacha Bàn told to his people. None believed him; but what could any do? There was no proof; none had ever seen them enter the sea-caves together. Not that Donnacha Bàn sought in any way to keep back those who would fain know more. Not so; he strove to help to find the body. Nevertheless, none believed; an' Giorsal nic Dugall Mòr least of all. The blight of that sorrow went to her heart. She had death soon, poor thing! but before the cold greyness was upon her she told her father, an' the minister that was there, that she knew Donnacha Bàn had murdered his brother. One might be saying these were the wild words of a woman; but, for sure, no one said that thing upon Borosay or Rona, or any of these isles. When all was done, the minister told what he knew, an' what he thought, to the Lord of the South Isles, and asked what was to be put upon

Donnacha Bàn. 'Exile for ever,' said the chief, 'or if he stays here, the doom of silence. Let no man or woman speak to him or give him food or drink, or give him shelter, or let his shadow cross his or hers.'

"When this thing was told to Donnacha Bàn Carmichael, he laughed at first; but as day after day slid over the rocks where all days fall, he laughed no more. Soon he saw that the chief's word was no empty word; an' yet would not go away from his own place. He could not stay upon Borosay, for his father cursed him; an' no man can stay upon the island where a father's curse moves this way an' that, for ever seeing him. Then, some say a madness came upon him, and others that he took wildness to be his way, and others that God put upon him the shadow of loneliness, so that he might meet sorrow there and repent. Howsoever that may be, Donnacha Bàn came to Rona, an' by the same token, it was the year of the great blight, when the potatoes and the corn came to naught, an' when the fish in the sea swam away from the isles. In the autumn of that year there was not a soul left on Rona except Giorsal an' the old man Ian, her father, who had guard of Caisteal-Rhona for him who was absent. When, once more,

years after, smoke rose from the crofts, the saying spread that Donnacha Bàn, the murderer, had made his home among the caves of the upper part of the isle. None knew how this saying rose, for he was seen of none. The last man who saw him—an' that was a year later—was old Padruig M'Vurich the shepherd. Padruig said that, as he was driving his ewes across the north slope of Ben Einaval in the gloaming, he came upon a silent figure seated upon a rock, with his chin in his hands, an' his elbows on his knees—with the great, sad eyes of him staring at the moon that was lifting itself out of the sea. Padruig did not know who the man was. The shepherd had few wits, poor man! and he had known, or remembered, little about the story of Donnacha Bàn Carmichael; so when he spoke to the man, it was as to a stranger. The man looked at him and said—

"'You are Padruig M'Vurich, the shepherd.'

"At that a trembling was upon old Padruig, who had the wonder that this stranger should know who and what he was.

"'And who will you be, and forgive the saying?' he asked.

"'*Am Fàidh*—the Prophet,' the man said.

"'And what prophet will you be, and what is your prophecy?' asked Padruig.

"'I am here because I wait for what is to be, and that will be the coming of the Woman who is the Daughter of God.'

"And with that the man said no more, an' the old shepherd went down through the gloaming, an', heavy with the thoughts that troubled him, followed his ewes down into Aonaig. But after that neither he nor any other saw or heard tell of the shadowy stranger; so that all upon Rona felt sure that Padruig had beheld no more than a vision. There were some who thought that he had seen the ghost of the outlaw Donnacha Bàn; an' mayhap one or two who wondered if the stranger that had said he was a prophet was not Donnacha Bàn himself, with a madness come upon him; but at last these sayings went out to sea upon the wind, an' men forgot. But, an' it was months and months afterwards, an' three days before his own death, old Padruig M'Vurich was sitting in the sunset on the rocky ledge in front of his brother's croft, where then he was staying, when he heard a strange crying of seals. He thought little of that; only, when he looked closer, he saw, in the hollow of the wave hard by that ledge, a drifting body.

"'*Am Fàidh—Am Fàidh!*' he cried; 'the Prophet, the Prophet!'

"At that his brother an' his brother's wife ran to see; but it was nothing that they saw. 'It would be a seal,' said Pòl M'Vurich; but at that Padruig had shook his head, an' said no for sure, he had seen the face of the dead man, an' it was of him whom he had met on the hillside, an' that had said he was the Prophet who was waiting there for the second coming of God.

"And that is how there came about the echo of the thought that Donnacha Bàn had at last, after his madness, gone under the green wave and was dead. For all that, in the months which followed, more than one man said he had seen a figure high up on the hill. The old wisdom says that when God comes again, or the prophet who will come before, it will be as a herdsman on a lonely isle. More than one of the old people on Rona and Borosay remembered that *sgeul* out of the *Seanachas* that the tale-tellers knew. There were some who said that Donnacha Bàn had never been drowned at all, an' that he was this Prophet, this Herdsman. Others would not have that saying at all, but believed that the wraith was indeed Am Buachaill Ban, the Fair-haired Shepherd, who had come

again to redeem the people out of their sorrow. There were even those who said that the Herdsman who haunted Rona was no other than Kenneth Carmichael himself, who had not died but had had the mind-dark there in the sea-caves where he had been lost, an' there had come to the knowledge of secret things, and so was at last Am Fàidh Chriosd."

A great weakness came upon the old woman when she had spoken thus far. Ian feared that she would have breath for no further word ; but after a thin gasping, and a listless fluttering of weak hands upon the coverlet, whereon her trembling fingers plucked aimlessly at the invisible blossoms of death, she opened her eyes once more, and stared in a dim questioning at him who sat by her bedside.

"Tell me," whispered Ian, "tell me Marsail, what thought it is that is in your own mind?"

But already the old woman had begun to wander.

"For sure, for sure," she muttered, "*Am Fàidh . . . Am Fàidh* . . . an' a child will be born . . . the Queen of Heaven, an' . . . that will be the voice of Domhuill, my husband, I

am hearing . . . an' dark it is, an' the tide comin' in . . . an'——"

Then, sure, the tide came in, and if in that darkness old Marsail Macrae heard any voice at all, it was that of Domhuill who years agone had sunk into the wild seas off the head of Barra.

An hour later Alan walked slowly under the cloudy night. All he had heard from Ian came back to him with a strange familiarity. Something of this, at least, he had known before. Some hints of this mysterious Herdsman had reached his ears. In some inexplicable way his real or imaginary presence there upon Rona seemed a pre-ordained thing for him.

He knew that the wild imaginings of the islanders had woven the legend of the Prophet, or of his mysterious message, out of the loom of the deep longing whereon is woven that larger tapestry, the shadow-thridden life of the island Gael. Laughter and tears, ordinary hopes and pleasures, and even joy itself, and bright gaiety, and the swift, spontaneous imaginations of susceptible natures—all this, of course, is to be found with the island Gael as with his fellows elsewhere. But every here and there are some who have in their minds the inheritance from

the dim past of their race, and are oppressed as no other people are oppressed by the gloom of a strife between spiritual emotion and material facts. It is the brains of dreamers such as these which clear the mental life of the community; and it is in these brains are the mysterious looms which weave the tragic and sorrowful tapestries of Celtic thought. It were a madness to suppose that life in the isles consists of nothing but sadness and melancholy. It is not so, or need not be so, for the Gael is a creature of shadow and shine. But whatever the people is, the brain of the Gael hears a music that is sadder than any music there is, and has for its cloudy sky a gloom that shall not go; for the end is near, and upon the westernmost shores of these remote isles the voice of Celtic sorrow may be heard crying, "*Cha till, cha till, cha till mi tuille*": "I will return, I will return, I will return no more."

Alan knew all this well; and yet he too dreamed his dream—that, even yet, there might be redemption for the people. He did not share the wild hope which some of the older islanders held, that Christ Himself shall come again to redeem an oppressed race; but might not another saviour arise, another redeeming spirit come into the world? And if

so, might not that child of joy be born out of suffering and sorrow and crime; and if so, might not the Herdsman be indeed a prophet, the Prophet of the Woman in whom God should come anew as foretold?

With startled eyes he crossed the thyme-set ledge whereon stood Caisteal-Rhona. Was it, after all, a message he had received, and was that which had appeared to him in that lonely cavern of the sea but a phantom of his own destiny? Was he himself, Alan Carmichael, indeed *Am Fàidh*, the predestined Prophet of the isles?

## V

Ever since the night of Marsail's death, Ian had noticed that Alan no longer doubted, but that in some way a special message had come to him, a special revelation. On the other hand, he had himself swung further into his conviction that the vision he had seen in the cavern was, in truth, that of a living man. On Borosay, he knew, the fishermen believed that the *aonaran nan creag*, the recluse of the rocks, as commonly they spoke of him, was no other than Donnacha Bàn Carmichael, survived there through these many years, and long since mad with his loneliness and because of the burden of his crime.

But by this time the islanders had come to see that Alan MacAilean was certainly not Donnacha Bàn. Even the startling likeness no longer betrayed them in this way. The ministers and the priests on Berneray and Barra scoffed at the whole story, and everywhere discouraged the idea that Donnacha Bàn could still be among the living. But for the common belief that to encounter the Herdsman, whether the lost soul of Donnacha Bàn or indeed the strange phantom of the hills of which the old legends spoke, was to meet inevitable disaster, the islanders might have been persuaded to make such a search among the caves of Rona as would almost certainly have revealed the presence of any who dwelt therein.

But as summer lapsed into autumn, and autumn itself through its golden silences waned into the shadow of the equinox, a strange, brooding serenity came upon Alan. Ian himself now doubted his own vision of the mysterious Herdsman—if he indeed existed at all except in the imaginations of those who spoke of him either as the Buachaill Bàn, or as the *aonaran nan creag*. If a real man, Ian believed that at last he had passed away. None saw the Herdsman now; and even Morag MacNeill, who had often on moonlight

nights been startled by the sound of a voice chanting among the upper solitudes, admitted that she now heard nothing unusual.

St. Martin's summer came at last, and with it all that wonderful, dreamlike beauty which bathes the isles in a flood of golden light, and draws over sea and land a veil of deeper mystery.

One late afternoon, Ian, returning to Caisteal-Rhona after an unexplained absence of several hours, found Alan sitting at a table. Spread before him were the sheets of one of the strange old Gaelic tales which he had ardently begun to translate. Alan lifted and slowly read the page or paraphrase which he had just laid down. It was after the homelier Gaelic of the *Eachdaireachd Challum mhic Cruimein.*

"And when that king had come to the island, he lived there in the shadow of men's eyes; for none saw him by day or by night, and none knew whence he came or whither he fared; for his feet were shod with silence, and his way with dusk. But men knew that he was there, and all feared him. Months, even years, tramped one on the heels of the other, and perhaps the king gave no sign, but one day he would give a sign; and that sign was a laughing that was heard somewhere, upon the

lonely hills, or on the lonely wave, or in the heart of him who heard, And whenever the king laughed, he who heard would fare ere long from his fellows to join that king in the shadow. But sometimes the king laughed only because of vain hopes and wild imaginings, for upon these he lives as well as upon the strange savours of mortality."

That night Alan awakened Ian suddenly, and taking him by the hand made him promise to go with him on the morrow to the Teampull-Mara.

In vain Ian questioned him as to why he asked this thing. All Alan would say was that he must go there once again, and with him, for he believed that a spirit out of heaven had come to reveal to him a wonder. Distressed by what he knew to be a madness, and fearful that it might prove to be no passing fantasy, Ian would fain have persuaded him against this intention. Even as he spoke, however, he realised that it might be better to accede to his wishes, and, above all, to be there with him, so that it might not be one only who heard or saw the expected revelation.

And it was a strange faring indeed, that which occurred on the morrow. At noon, when the tide was an hour turned in the ebb,

they sailed westward from Caisteal-Rhona. It was in silence they made that strange journey together; for, while Ian steered, Alan lay down in the hollow of the boat, with his head against the old man's knees, and slept, or at least lay still with his eyes closed.

When at last they passed the headland and entered the first of the sea-arcades, Alan rose and sat beside him. Hauling down the now useless sale, Ian took an oar and, standing at the prow, urged the boat inward along the narrow corridor which led to the huge sea-cave of the Altar.

In the deep gloom—for even on that day of golden light and beauty the green air of the sea-cave was heavy with shadow—there was a deathly chill. What dull light there was came from the sheen of the green water which lay motionless along the black basaltic ledges. When at last the base of the Altar was reached, Ian secured the boat by a rope passed around a projecting spur, and then seated himself in the stern beside Alan.

"Tell me, Alan-a-ghaoil, what is this thing that you are thinking you will hear or see?"

Alan looked at him strangely for a while, but, though his lips moved, he said nothing.

"Tell me, my heart," Ian urged again, "who is it you expect to see or hear?"

"*Am Buachaill Bàn*," Alan answered, "the Herdsman."

For a moment Ian hesitated. Then, taking Alan's hand in his and raising it to his lips, he whispered in his ear—

"There is no Herdsman upon Rona. If a man was there who lived solitary, the *aonaran nan creag* is dead long since. What you have seen and heard has been a preying upon you of wild thoughts. Be thinking no more now of this vision."

"This man," Alan answered quietly, "is not Donnacha Bàn, but the Prophet of whom the people speak. He himself has told me this thing. Yesterday I was here, and he bade me come again. He spoke out of the shadow that is about the Altar, though I saw him not. I asked him if he were Donnacha Bàn, and he said 'No.' I asked him if he were *Am Fàidh*, and he said 'Yes.' I asked him if he were indeed an immortal spirit and herald of that which was to be, and he said 'Even so.'"

For a long while after this no word was spoken. The chill of that remote place began to affect Allen, and he shivered slightly at times. But more he shivered because of the silence, and because that he who had promised to be there gave no sign. Sure, he thought, it

could not be all a dream ; sure, the Herdsman would come again.

Then at last, turning to Ian, he said, "We must come on the morrow, for to-day he is not here."

"I will do what you ask, Alan-mo-ghaol."

But of a sudden Alan stepped on the black ledges at the base of the Altar, and slowly mounted the precipitous rock.

Ian watched him till he became a shadow in that darkness. His heart leaped when suddenly he heard a cry fall out of the gloom.

"Alan, Alan!" he cried, and a great fear was upon him when no answer came ; but at last he heard him clambering slowly down the perilous slope of that obscure place. When he reached the ledge Alan stood still regarding him.

"Why do you not come into the boat?" Ian asked, terrified because of what he saw in Alan's eyes.

Alan looked at him with parted lips, his breath coming and going like that of a caged bird.

"What is it?" Ian whispered.

"Ian, when I reached the top of the Altar, and in the dim light that was there, I saw the dead body of a man lying upon the rock. His head was lain back so that the gleam from a

crevice in the cliff overhead fell upon it. The man had been dead many hours. He is a man whose hair has been greyed by years and sorrow, but the man is he who is of my blood; he whom I resemble so closely; he that the fishermen call the hermit of the rocks; he that is the Herdsman."

Ian stared, with moving lips: then in a whisper he spoke—

"Would you be for following a herdsman who could lead you to no fold? This man is dead, Alan mac Alasdair; and it is well that you brought me here to-day. That is a good thing, and for sure God has willed it."

"It is not a man that is dead. It is my soul that lies there. It is dead. God called me to be His Prophet, and I hid in dreams. It is the end." And with that, and death staring out of his eyes, he entered the boat and sat down beside Ian.

"Let us go," he said, and that was all.

Slowly Ian oared the boat across the shadowy gulf of the cave, along the narrow passage, and into the pale green gloom of the outer cavern, wherein the sound of the sea made a forlorn requiem in his ears.

But the short November day was already passing to its end. All the sea westward was aflame with gold and crimson light, and in

the great dome of the sky a wonderful radiance lifted above the paleness of the clouds, whose pinnacled and bastioned heights towered in the south-west.

A faint wind blew eastwardly. Raising the sail, Ian made it fast and then sat down beside Alan. But he, rising, moved along the boat to the mast, and leaned there with his face against the setting sun.

Idly they drifted onward. Deep silence lay between them; deep silence was all about them, save for the ceaseless, inarticulate murmur of the sea, the splash of low waves against the rocks of Rona, and the sigh of the surf at the base of the basalt precipices.

And this was their homeward sailing on that day of revelation: Alan, with his back against the mast, and his lifeless face irradiated by the light of the setting sun; Ian, steering, with his face in shadow.

*Love in Shadow has two sacred ministers, Oblivion and Faith, one to heal, the other to renovate and upbuild.*—F. M.

# FRAGMENTS FROM "GREEN FIRE"

## THE BIRDS OF ANGUS ÒG

*"Then, in the violet forest all a-bourgeon, Eucharis, said to me: It is Spring."*—ARTHUR RIMBAUD.

After the dim purple bloom of a suspended Spring, a green rhythm ran from larch to thorn, from lime to sycamore: spread from meadow to meadow, from copse to copse, from hedgerow to hedgerow. The blackthorn had already snowed upon the nettle-garths. In the obvious nests, among the bare boughs of ash and beech, the eggs of the blackbird were blue-green as the sky that March had bequeathed to April. For days past, when the breath of the Equinox had surged out of the west, the missel-thrushes had bugled from the wind-swayed topmost branches of the tallest elms. Everywhere the green rhythm ran.

In every leaf that had uncurled there was a delicate bloom, that which is upon all things in the first hours of life. The spires of the grass were washed in a green, dewy light.

Out of the brown earth a myriad living things thrust tiny green shafts, arrow-heads, bulbs, spheres, clusters. Along the pregnant soil keener ears than ours would have heard the stir of new life, the innumerous whisper of the bursting seed: and, in the wind itself, shepherding the shadow-chased sunbeams, the voice of that vernal gladness which has been man's clarion since Time began.

Day by day the wind-wings lifted a more multitudinous whisper from the woodlands. The deep hyperborean note, from the invisible ocean of air, was still audible: within the concourse of bare boughs which wrought against it, that surging voice could not but have an echo of its wintry roar. In the sun-havens, however, along the southerly copses, in daisied garths of orchard-trees, amid the flowering currant and guelder and lilac bushes, in quiet places where the hives were all a-murmur, the wind already sang its lilt of Spring. From dawn till noon, from an hour before sundown till the breaking foam along the wild-cherry flushed fugitively because of the crimson glow out of the west, there was a ceaseless chittering of birds. The starlings and the sparrows enjoyed the commume of the homestead; the larks and fieldfares and green and yellow linnets congregated in the

meadows, where, too, the wild bee already roved. Among the brown ridgy fallows there was a constant flutter of black, white-gleaming, and silver-grey wings, where the stalking rooks, the jerking peewits, and the wary, uncertain gulls from the neighbouring sea feasted tirelessly from the teeming earth. Often, too, the wind-hover, that harbinger of the season of the young broods, quivered his curved wings in his arrested flight, while his lance-like gaze penetrated the whins beneath which a new-born rabbit crawled, or discerned in the tangle of a grassy tuft the brown watchful eyes of a nesting quail.

In the remoter woodlands the three foresters of April could be heard; the woodpecker tapping on the gnarled boles of the oaks, the wild dove calling in low crooning monotones to his silent mate, the cuckoo tolling his infrequent peals from skiey belfries built of sun and mist.

In the fields, where the thorns were green as rivulets of melted snow and the grass had the bloom of emerald, and the leaves of docken, clover, cinquefoil, sorrel, and a thousand plants and flowers, were wave-green, the ewes lay, idly watching with their luminous amber eyes the frisking and leaping of the close-curled, tuft-tailed, woolly-legged lambs. In corners of the hedgerows, and in

hollows in the rolling meadows, the primrose, the celandine, the buttercup, the dandelion, and the daffodil spilled little eddies of the sunflood which overbrimmed them with light. All day long the rapture of the larks filled the blue air with vanishing spirals of music, swift and passionate in the ascent, repetitive and less piercing in the narrowing downward gyres. From every whin the poignant monotonous note of the yellow hammer re-echoed. Each pastoral hedge was alive with robins, chaffinches, and the dusky shadows of the wild mice darting here and there among the greening boughs.

Whenever this green fire is come upon the earth, the swift contagion spreads to the human heart. What the seedlings feel in the trees, what the blood feels in the brown mould, what the sap feels in every creature from the newt in the pool to the nesting bird, so feels the strange remembering ichor that runs its red tides through human hearts and brains. Spring has its subtler magic for us, because of the dim mysteries of unremembering remembrance and of the vague radiances of hope. Something in us sings an ascendant song, and we expect we know not what: something in us sings a decrescent song, and we realise vaguely the stirring of immemorial memories.

There is none who will admit that Spring is fairer elsewhere than in his own land. But there are regions where the season is so hauntingly beautiful that it would seem as though Angus Òg knew them for his chosen resting-places in his green journey.

Angus Òg, Angus MacGreigne, Angus the Ever Youthful, the Son of the Sun, a fair god he indeed, golden-haired and wonderful as Apollo Chrusokumos. Some say that he is Love: some, that he is Spring: some, even, that in him Thanatos, the Hellenic Celt that was his far-off kin, is reincarnate. But why seek riddles in flowing water? It may well be that Angus Og is Love, and Spring, and Death. The elemental gods are ever triune: and in the human heart, in whose lost Eden an ancient tree of knowledge grows, wherefrom the mind has not yet gathered more than a few windfalls, it is surely sooth that Death and Love are oftentimes one and the same, and that they love to come to us in the apparel of Spring.

Sure, indeed, Angus Òg is a name above all sweet to lovers, for is he not the god—the fair Youth of the Tuatha-de-Danann, the Ancient People, with us still, though for ages seen of us no more—from the meeting of whose lips are born white birds, which fly

abroad and nest in lovers' hearts till the moment come when, on the yearning lips of love, their invisible wings shall become kisses again?

Then, too, there is the old legend that Angus goes to and fro upon the world, a weaver of rainbows. He follows the Spring, or is its herald. Often his rainbows are seen in the heavens: often in the rapt gaze of love. We have all perceived them in the eyes of children, and some of us have discerned them in the hearts of sorrowful women, and in the dim brains of the old. Ah, for sure, if Angus Og be the lovely Weaver of Hope, he is deathless comrade of the Spring, and we may well pray to him to let his green fire move in our veins; whether he be but the Eternal Youth of the World, or be also Love, whose soul is youth; or even though he be likewise Death himself, Death to whom Love was wedded long, long ago.

## II

Alan was a poet, and to dream was his birthright. . . . He was ever occupied by that wonderful past of his race which was to him a living reality. It was perhaps because he so keenly perceived the romance of the present—the romance of the general hour, of the individual moment—that he turned so insatiably to the past with its deathless charm, its haunting appeal. . . . His mind was as irresistibly drawn to the Celtic world of the past as the swallow to the sun-way. In a word he was not only a poet but a Celtic poet; and not only a Celtic poet but a dreamer of the Celtic dream. Perhaps this was because of the double strain in his veins. Doubtless, too, it was continuously enhanced by his intimate knowledge of two of the Celtic languages, that of the Breton and that of the Gael. It is language that is the surest stimulus to the remembering nerves. We have

a memory within memory as layers of skin underlie the epidermis. With most of us this anterior remembrance remains dormant throughout life : but to some are given swift ancestral recollections. Alan was of these.

With this double key Alan unlocked many doors. In his brain ran ever that Ossianic tide which has borne so many marvellous argosies through the troubled waters of the modern mind. Old ballad of his nature isles, with their haunting Gaelic rhythm of idioms, their frequent reminiscence of Norse viking and the Danish summer-sailor were often in his ears. He had lived with his hero Cuchullin from the days when the boy shewed his royal blood at Emain-Macha till that sad hour when his madness came upon him and he died. He had fared forth with many a Lifting of the Sunbeam, and had followed Oisin step by step on that last melancholy journey when Malvina led the blind old man along the lonely shores of Arran. He had watched the *crann-tara* flare from glen to glen, and at the bidding of that fiery cross he had seen the whirling of the swords, the dusky flight of arrow-rain, and from the isles, the leaping forth of the war *birlinns* to meet the Viking galleys. How often, too, he had followed trial of Niall of the nine Hostages and had seen the Irish

Charlemagne ride victor through Saxon London, or across the Norman plains or with onward sword direct his army against the white walls of the Alps! . . . It was all this marvellous life of old which wrought upon Alan's life as by a spell. Often he recalled the words of a Gaelic *Sean* he had heard Yann croon in his soft monotonous voice,—words which made a light shoreward eddy of the present and were solemn with the deep-sea sound of the past, that is with us even as we speak. . . .

Truly his soul must have lived a thousand years ago. In him, at least, the old Celtic brain was reborn with a vivid intensity which none guessed, for Alan himself only vaguely surmised the extent and depth of this obsession. In heart and brain that old world lived anew. Himself a poet, all that was fair and tragically beautiful was for ever undergoing in his mind a marvellous transformation—a magical resurrection rather, wherein what was remote and bygone, and crowned with oblivious dust, became alive again with intense and beautiful life. . . .

Deep passion instinctively moves towards the shadow rather than towards the golden noons of light. Passion hears what love at

most dreams of; passion sees what love may-hap dimly discerns in a glass darkly. A million of our fellows are "in love" at any or every moment: and for these the shadowy way is intolerable. But for the few, in whom love is, the eyes are circumspect against the dark hour which comes when heart and brain and blood are aflame with the paramount ecstasy of love. . . .

Oh, flame that burns where fires of home are lit! and oh, flame that burns in the heart to whom life has not said, Awake! and oh, flame that smoulders from death to life, and from life to death, in the dumb lives of those to whom the primrose way is closed! Everywhere the burning of the burning, the flame of the flame, pain and the shadow of pain, joy and the rapt breath of joy, flame of the flame that, burning, destroyeth not, till the flame is no more! .

It is said of an ancient poet of the Druid days that he had the power to see the lines of the living, and these as though they were phantoms, separate from the body. Was there not a young king of Albainn who, in a perilous hour, discovered the secret of old time, and knew how a life may be hidden away from the body so that none may know of it, save the

wind that whispers all things, and the tides of day and night that bear all things upon their dark flood? . . .

The fragrance of the forest intoxicated him. Spring was come indeed. The wild storm had ruined nothing, for at its fiercest it had swept overhead. Everywhere the green fire of Spring would be litten anew. A green flame would pass from meadow to hedgerow, from hedgerow to the tangled thickets of bramble and dog-rose, from the underwoods to the inmost forest glades.

Everywhere song would be to the birds, everywhere young life would pulse, everywhere the rhythm of a new rapture would run rejoicing. The Miracle of Spring would be accomplished in the sight of all men, of all birds and beasts, of all green life. Each, in its kind would have a swifter throb in the red blood of the vivid sap. . . .

She was his Magic. The light of their love was upon everything. Deeply as he loved beauty he had learned to love it far more keenly and understandingly because of her. He saw now through the accidental and everywhere discerned the Eternal Beauty, the echoes of whose wandering are in every heart and brain though few discern the white vision or hear the haunting voice. . . . Thus it was she

had for him this immutable attraction which a few women have for a few men ; an appeal, a charm, that atmosphere of romance, that *air* of ideal beauty, wherein lies the secret of all passionate art.

The world without wonder, the world without mystery ! That indeed is the rainbow without colours, the sunrise without living gold, the noon void of light. . . .

In deep love there is no height nor depth between two hearts, no height nor depth nor length nor breadth. There is simply love. What if both at times were wrought too deeply by this beautiful dream ? What if the inner life triumphed now and then, and each forgot the deepest instinct of life that here the body is overlord, and the soul but a divine consort ?

There are three races of man. There is the myriad race which loses all through (not bestiality, for the brute world is clean and sane) perverted animalism ; and there is the myriad race which denounces humanity, and pins all its faith and joy to a life the very conditions of whose existence are incompatible with the law to which we are subject—the sole law, the law of nature.

Then there is that small untoward clan,

which knows the divine call of the spirit through the brain, and the secret whisper of the soul in the heart, and for ever perceives the veils of mystery and the rainbows of hope upon our human horizons, which hears and sees, and yet turns wisely, meanwhile, to the life of the green earth, of which we are part, to the common kindred of living things with which we are at one—is content, in a word, to live because of the dream that makes living so mysteriously sweet and poignant; and to dream because of the commanding immediacy of life. . . .

What are dreams but the dust of wayfaring thoughts? Or whence are they, and what air is upon their shadowy wings? Do they come out of the twilight of man's mind: are they ghosts of exiles from vanished palaces of the brain: or are they heralds with proclamations of hidden tidings for the soul that dreams?

## III

### THE BEAUTY OF THE WORLD

"*The Souls of the Living are the Beauty of the World.*"—BACON.

For out of his thoughts about Annaik and Ynys arose a fuller, a deeper conception of womanhood. How well he remembered a legend that Ynys had once told him: a legend of a fair spirit which goes to and fro upon the world, the Weaver of Tears. He loves the pathways of sorrow. His voice is low and sweet, with a sound like the bubbling of waters in that fount whence the rainbows rise. His eyes are in quiet places, and in the dumb pain of animals as in the agony of the human brain: but most he is found, oftenest are the dewy traces of his feet, in the heart of woman.

Tears, tears: they are not the saltest tears which are on the lids of those who weep. Fierce tears there are, hot founts of pain in the mind of many a man, that are never shed, but slowly crystallise in furrows on brow and face, and in deep weariness in the eyes: fierce

tears, unquenchable, in the heart of many a woman, whose brave eyes look fearlessly at life, whose dauntless courage goes forth daily to die but never to be vanquished.

In truth the Weaver of Tears abides in the heart of woman. O Mother of Pity, of Love, of deep Compassion : with thee it is to yearn for ever for the ideal human, to bring the spiritual love into fashion with human desire, endlessly to strive, endlessly to fail, always to hope in spite of disillusion, to love unswervingly against all baffling and misunderstanding, and even forgetfulness ! O Woman, whose eyes are always stretched out to her erring children, whose heart is big enough to cover all the little children in the world, and suffer with their sufferings, and joy with their joys : Woman, whose other divine names are Strength and Patience, who is no girl, no virgin, because she has drunk too deeply of the fount of Life to be very young or very joyful. Upon her lips is the shadowy kiss of death : in her eyes is the shadow of birth. She is the veiled interpreter of the two mysteries. Yet what joyousness like hers, when she wills : because of her unwavering hope, her inexhaustible fount of love ?

So it was that just as Alan had long recognised as a deep truth, how the spiritual nature

of man has been revealed to humanity in many divine incarnations, so he had come to believe that the spiritual nature of woman has been revealed in the many Marys, sisters of the Beloved, who have had the keys of the soul and the heart in their unconscious keeping. In this exquisite truth he knew a fresh and vivid hope. . . . A Woman-Saviour, who would come near to all of us, because in her heart would be the blind tears of the child, the bitter tears of the man, and the patient tears of the woman: who would be the Compassionate One, with no end or aim but compassion—with no doctrine to teach, no way to show, but only deep, wonderful, beautiful, inalienable, unquenchable compassion.

For in truth there is the divine eternal feminine counterpart to the divine eternal male, and both are needed to explain the mystery of the dual spirit within us—the mystery of the two in one, so infinitely stranger and more wonderful than that triune life which the blind teachers of the blind have made a rock of stumbling and offence out of a truth clear and obvious as noon.

We speak of Mother Nature, but we do not discern the living truth behind our words. How few of us have the vision of this great brooding Mother, whose garment is the

earth and sea, whose head is pillowed among the stars: she, who, with death and sleep as her familiar shapes, soothes and rests all the weariness of the world, from the waning leaf to the beating pulse, from the brief span of a human heart to the furrowing of granite brows by the uninterrupted sun, the hounds of rain and wind, and the untrammelled airs of heaven.

Not cruel, relentless, impotently anarchic, chaotically potent, this Mater Genetrix. We see her thus, who are flying threads in the loom she weaves. But she is patient, abiding, certain, inviolate, and silent ever. It is only when we come to this vision of her whom we call Isis, or Hera, or Orchil, or one of a hundred other names, our unknown Earth-Mother, that men and women will know each other aright, and go hand in hand along the road of life without striving to crush, to subdue, to usurp, to retaliate, to separate.

Ah, fair vision of humanity to come: man and woman side by side, sweet, serene, true, simple, natural, fulfilling earth's and heaven's behests, unashamed, unsophisticated, unaffected, each to each and for each, children of one mother, inheritors of a like destiny, and, at the last, artificers of an equal fate.

Pondering thus, Alan rose, and looked out,

into the night. In that great stillness, wherein the moonlight lay like the visible fragrance of the earth, he gazed long and intently. How shadowy, now, were those lives that had so lately palpitated in this very place: how strange their silence, their incommunicable knowledge, their fathomless peace!

Was it all lost . . . the long endurance of pain, the pangs of sorrow? If so, what was the lesson of life? Surely to live with sweet serenity and gladness, content against the inevitable hour. There is solace of a kind in the idea of a common end, of that terrible processional march of life wherein the myriad is momentary, and the immeasurable is but a passing shadow. But, alas, it is only solace of a kind: for what heart that has beat to the pulse of love can relinquish the sweet dream of life, and what coronal can philosophy put upon the brows of youth in place of eternity.

No, no: of this he felt sure. In the Beauty of the World lies the ultimate redemption of our mortality. When we shall become at one with nature in a sense profounder even than the poetic imaginings of most of us, we shall understand what now we fail to discern. The arrogance of those who would have the stars as candles for our night, and the universe as

a pleasance for our thought, will be as impossible as their blind fatuity who say we are of dust, briefly vitalised, that shall be dust again, with no fragrance saved from the rude bankruptcy of life, no beauty raised up against the sun to bloom anew.

It is no idle dream, this : no idle dream that we are a perishing clan among the sons of God, because of this slow waning of our joy, of our passionate delight, in the Beauty of the World. We have been unable to look out upon the shining of our star, for the vision overcomes us ; and we have used veils which we call "scenery," "picturesqueness," and the like—poor, barren words that are so voiceless and remote before the rustle of leaves and the lap of water, before the ancient music of the wind, and all the sovran eloquence of the tides of light. But a day may come—nay, shall surely come—when indeed the poor and the humble shall inherit the earth : they who have not made a league with temporal evils and out of whose heart shall arise the deep longing, that shall become universal, of the renewal of youth.

. . . Often, too, alone in his observatory, where he was wont to spend much of his time, Alan knew that strange nostalgia of the

mind for impossible things. Then, wrought, for a while from his vision of green life, and flamed by another green fire than that born of the earth, hs dreamed his dream. With him, the peopled solitude of night was a concourse of confirming voices. He did not dread the silence of the stars, the cold remoteness of the stellar fire.

In that other watch-tower in Paris, where he had spent the best hours of his youth, he had loved that nightly watch on the constellations. Now, as then, in the pulse of the planets he found assurances which faith had not given him. In the vast majestic order of that nocturnal march, that diurnal retreat, he had learned the law of the whirling leaf and the falling star, of the slow æon-delayed comet and of the slower wane of solar fires. Looking with visionary eyes into that congregation of stars, he realised, not the littleness of the human dream, but its divine impulsion. It was only when, after long vigils into the quietudes of night, he turned his gaze from the palaces of the unknown, and thought of the baffled fretful swarming in the cities of men, that his soul rose in revolt against the sublime ineptitude of man's spiritual leaguer against destiny.

Destiny—"An Dan"—it was a word familiar

to him since childhood, when first he had heard it on the lips of old Ian Macdonald. And once, on the eve of the Feast of Paschal, when Alan had asked Daniel Dare what was the word which the stars spelled from zenith to nadir, the Astronomer had turned and answered simply, "*C'est le Destin.*"

But Alan was of the few to whom this talismanic word opens lofty perspectives, even while it obscures those paltry vistas which we deem unending and dignify with vain hopes and void immortalities.

*To live in Beauty is to sum up in four words all the spiritual aspiration of the soul of man.*—F. M.

# A DREAM

*To*

*G. R. S. MEAD*

*Our thought, our consciousness, is but the scintillation of a wave: below us is a moving shadow, our brief forecast and receding way; beneath the shadow are depths sinking into depths, and then the unfathomable unknown.*—F.M.

# A Dream

I was on a vast, an illimitable plain, where the dark blue horizons were sharp as the edges of hills. It was the world, but there was nothing in the world. There was not a blade of grass nor the hum of an insect, nor the shadow of a bird's wing. The mountains had sunk like waves in the sea when there is no wind; the barren hills had become dust. Forests had become the fallen leaf; and the leaf had passed. I was aware of one who stood beside me, though that knowledge was of the spirit only; and my eyes were filled with the same nothingness as I beheld above and beneath and beyond. I would have thought I was in the last empty glens of Death, were it not for a strange and terrible sound that I took to be the voice of the wind coming out of nothing, travelling over nothingness and moving onward into nothing,

"There is only the wind," I said to myself in a whisper.

Then the voice of the dark Power beside me, whom in my heart I knew to be Dalua, the

Master of Illusions, said: "Verily, this is your last illusion."

I answered: "It is the wind."

And the voice answered: "That is not the wind that you hear, for the wind is dead. It is the empty, hollow echo of my laughter."

Then, suddenly, he who was beside me lifted up a small stone, smooth as a pebble of the sea. It was grey and flat, and yet to me had a terrible beauty because it was the last vestige of the life of the world.

The Presence beside me lifted up the stone and said: "It is the end."

And the horizons of the world came in upon me like a rippling shadow. And I leaned over darkness and saw whirling stars. These were gathered up like leaves blown from a tree, and in a moment their lights were quenched, and they were further from me than grains of sand blown on a whirlwind of a thousand years.

Then he, that terrible one, Master of Illusions, let fall the stone, and it sank into the abyss and fell immeasurably into the infinite. And under my feet the world was as a falling wave, and was not. And I fell, though without sound, without motion. And for years and years I fell below the dim waning of light; and for years and years I fell through

universes of dusk; and for years and years and years I fell through the enclosing deeps of darkness. It was to me as though I fell for centuries, for æons, for unimaginable time. I knew I had fallen beyond time, and that I inhabited eternity, where were neither height, nor depth, nor width, nor space.

But, suddenly, without sound, without motion, I stood steadfast upon a vast ledge. Before me, on that ledge of darkness become rock, I saw this stone which had been lifted from the world of which I was a shadow, after shadow itself had died away. And as I looked, this stone became fire and rose in flame. Then the flame was not. And when I looked the stone was water; it was as a pool that did not overflow, a wave that did not rise or fall, a shaken mirror wherein nothing was troubled.

Then, as dew is gathered in silence, the water was without form or colour or motion. And the stone seemed to me like a handful of earth held idly in the poise of unseen worlds. What I thought was a green flame rose from it, and I saw that it had the greenness of grass, and had the mystery of life. The green herb passed as green grass in a drought; and I saw the waving of wings. And I saw shape upon shape, and image upon

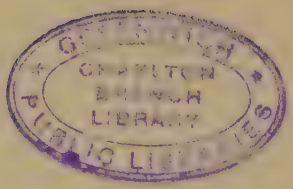
image, and symbol upon symbol. Then I saw a man, and he, too, passed ; and I saw a woman, and she, too, passed ; and I saw a child, and the child passed. Then the stone was a Spirit. And it shone there like a lamp. And I fell backward through deeps of darkness, through unimaginable time.

And when I stood upon the world again it was like a glory. And I saw the stone lying at my feet.

And One said : "Do you not know me, brother?"

And I said : "Speak, Lord."

And Christ stooped and kissed me upon the brow.



# NOTES

*Unity does not lie in the emotional life of expression which we call Art, which discerns it; it does not lie in nature, but in the Soul of man.*—F. M.

# Notes to First Edition

## THE DIVINE ADVENTURE

When "The Divine Adventure" appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* in November and December last, I received many comments and letters. From these I infer that my present readers will also be of two sections, those who understand at once why, in this symbolical presentment, I ignore the allegorical method—and those who, accustomed to the artificial method of allegory, would rather see this "story of a soul" told in that method, without actuality, or as an ordinary essay stript of narrative.

But each can have only his own way of travelling towards a desired goal. I chose my way, because in no other, as it seemed to me, could I convey what I wanted to convey. Is it so great an effort of the imagination to conceive of the Mind and Soul actual as the Body is actual? And is there any tragic issue so momentous, among all the tragic issues of life, as the problem of the Spirit, the

Mind—the Will as I call it; that problem as to whether it has to share the assured destiny of the Body, or the desired and possible destiny of the Soul? There is no spiritual tragedy so poignant as this uncertainty of the Will, the Spirit, what we call the thinking part of us, before the occult word of the Soul, inhabiting here but as an impatient exile, and the inevitable end of that Body to which it is so intimately allied, with which are its immediate, and in a sense its most vital interests, and in whose mortality it would seem to have a dreadful share.

The symbolist, unlike the allegorist, cannot disregard the actual, the reality as it seems: he must, indeed, be supremely heedful of this reality as it seems. The symbolist or the mystic (properly they are one) abhors the vague, what is called the "mystical": he is supremely a realist, but his realism is of the spirit and the imagination, and not of externals, or rather not of these merely, for there, too, he will not disregard actuality, but make it his base, as the lark touches the solid earth before it rises where it can see both Earth and Heaven and sing a song that partakes of each and belongs to both. "In the kingdom of the imagination the ideal must ever be faithful to the general laws of nature," wrote

one of the wisest of mystics. Art is pellucid mystery, and the only spiritually logical interpretation of life; and her inevitable language is Symbol—by which (whether in colour, or form, or sound, or word, or however the symbol be translated) a spiritual image illumines a reality that the material fact narrows or obscures.

For the rest, "The Divine Adventure" is an effort to solve, or obtain light upon, the profoundest human problem. It is by looking inward that we shall find the way outward. The gods—and what we mean by the gods—the gods seeking God have ever penetrated the soul by two roads, that of nature and that of art. Edward Calvert put it supremely well when he said "I go inward to God: outward to the gods." It was Calvert also who wrote:—

"To charm the truthfulness of eternal law into a guise which it has not had before, and clothe the invention with expression, this is the magic with which the poet would lead the listener into a world of his own, and make him sit down in the charmed circle of his own gods."

*Page* 96. The *Félire na Naomh Nerennach* (so spelt, more phonetically than correctly)

is an invaluable early "Chronicle of Irish Saints." Uladh—or Ulla—is the Gaelic for Ulster, though the ancient boundaries were not the same as those of the modern province; and at periods Uladh stood for all North Ireland. Tara in the south was first the capital of a kingdom, and later the federal capital. Thus, at the beginning of the Christian era, Concobar mac Nessa was both King of the Ultonians (the clans of Uladh) and Ard-Righ or High-King of Ireland, a nominal suzerainty.

The name of Mochaoi's abbacy, *n' Aondruim*, was in time anglicised to Antrim.

The characteristic Gaelic passage quoted in English at p. 98 is not from the *Félire na Naomh Nerennach*, but from a Hebridean source: excerpted from one of the many treasures-trove rescued from extant or recently extant Gaelic lore by Mr. Alexander Carmichael, all soon to be published (the outcome of a long life of unselfish devotion) under the title *Or agus Ob*, though we may be sure that there will be little "dross" and much "gold."

*Page* 101. The allusion is to the story or sketch called "The Book of the Opal" in *The Dominion of Dreams:* a sketch true in essen-

tials, but having at its close an arbitrary interpolation of external symbolism which I now regret as superfluous. I have since realised that the only living and convincing symbol is that which is conceived of the spirit and not imagined by the mind. My friend's life, and end, were strange enough—and significant enough—without the effort to bring home to other minds by an arbitrary formula what should have been implicit.

*Page* 102. I have again and again, directly or indirectly, since my first book *Pharais* to the repeated record in this book, alluded to Seumas Macleod; and as I have shown in "Barabal," here, and in the dedication to this book, it is to the old islander and to my Hebridean nurse, Barabal, that I owe more than to any other early influences. For those who do not understand the character of the Island-Gael, or do not realise that all Scotland is not Presbyterian, it may be as well to add that many of the islesmen are of the Catholic faith (broadly, the Southern Hebrides are wholly Catholic), and that therefore the brooding imagination of an old islander—who spoke Gaelic only, and had never visited the mainland—might the more readily dwell upon Mary the Mother: Mary of the Lamb, Mary

the Shepherdess, as she is lovingly called. I do not, for private reasons, name the island where he lived : but I have written of him, or of what he said, nothing but what was so, or was thus said. He had suffered much, and was lonely : but was, I think, the happiest, and, I am sure, the wisest human being I have known. What I cannot now recall is whether his belief in Mary's Advent was based on an old prophecy, or upon a faith of his own dreams and visions, coloured by the visions and dreams of a like mind and longing : perhaps, and likeliest, upon both. I was not more than seven years old when that happened of which I have written on p. 102, and so recall with surety only that which I saw and heard.

I am glad to know that another is hardly less indebted to old Seumas Macleod. I am not permitted to mention his name, but a friend and kinsman allows me to tell this : that when he was about sixteen he was on the remote island where Seumas lived, and on the morrow of his visit came at sunrise upon the old man, standing looking seaward with his bonnet removed from his long white locks ; and upon his speaking to Seumas (when he saw he was not "at his prayers") was answered, in Gaelic of course, "Every

morning like this I take off my hat to the beauty of the world."

The untaught islander who could say this had learned an ancient wisdom, of more account than wise books, than many philosophies.

Let me tell one other story of him, which I have meant often to tell, but have as often forgotten. He had gone once to the Long Island, with three fishermen, in their herring-coble. The fish had been sold, and the boat had sailed southward to a Lews haven where Seumas had a relative. The younger men had "hanselled" their good bargain overwell, and were laughing and talking freely, as they walked up the white road from the haven. Something was said that displeased Seumas greatly, and he might have spoken swiftly in reproof; but just then a little naked child ran laughing from a cottage, chased by his smiling mother. Seumas caught up the child, who was but an infant, and set him in their midst, and then kneeled and said the few words of a Hebridean hymn beginning:—

> "Even as a little child
> Most holy, pure. . . ."

No more was said, but the young men understood; and he who long afterward told me of

this episode added that though he had often since acted weakly and spoken foolishly, he had never, since that day, uttered foul words. Another like characteristic anecdote of Seumas (as the skipper who made his men cease mocking a "fool) I have told in the tale called "The Amadan" in the *The Dominion of Dreams.*

I could write much of this revered friend—so shrewd and genial and worldly-wise, for all his lonely life; so blithe in spirit and swiftly humorous; himself a poet, and remembering countless songs and tales of old; strong and daring, on occasion; good with the pipes, as with the nets; seldom angered, but then with a fierce anger, barbaric in its vehemence; a loyal clansman; in all things, good and not so good, a Gael of the Isles.

But since I have not done so, not gathered into one place, I add this note.

*Page* 113. The kingdom of the Suderöer (*i.e.* Southern Isles) was the Norse name for the realm of the Hebrides and Inner Hebrides when the Isles were under Scandinavian dominion.

*Page* 118. The ignorance or supineness which characterises so many English writers

on Celtic history is to be found even among Highland and Irish clerics and others who have not taken the trouble to study or even become acquainted with their own ancient literature, but fallen into the foolish and discreditable conventionalism which maintains that before Columban or in pre-Christian days the Celtic race consisted of wholly uncivilised and broken tribes, rivals only in savagery.

How little true that is; as wide of truth as the statements that the far influences of Iona ceased with the death of Columba. Not only was the island for two centuries thereafter (in the words of an eminent historian) "the nursery of bishops, the centre of education, the asylum of religious knowledge, the place of union, the capital and necropolis of the Celtic race," but the spiritual colonies of Iona had everywhere leavened western Europe. Charlemagne knew and reverenced "this little people of Iona," who from a remote island in the wild seas beyond the almost as remote countries of Scotland and England had spread the Gospel everywhere. Not only were many monasteries founded by monks from Iona in the narrower France of that day, but also in Lorraine, Alsatia, in Switzerland, and in the German states; in distant

Bavaria even, no fewer than sixteen were thus founded. In the very year the Danes made their first descent on the doomed island, a monk of Iona was Bishop of Tarento in Italy. In a word, in that day, Iona was the brightest gem in the spiritual crown of Rome.

*Page* 128. The "little-known namesake of my own" alluded to is Fiona, or Fionaghal Macleod, known (in common with her more famous sister Mary) by the appellation *Nighean Alasdair Ruadh*, "Daughter of Alasdair the Red," was born *circa* 1575.

*Page* 130. Columba, whose house-name was Crimthan, "Wolf"—surviving in our Scoto-Gaelic MacCrimmon—who was of royal Irish blood and, through his mother of royal Scottish (Pictish) blood also, came to Iona in A.D. 563, when he was in his forty-second year. At that date, St. Augustine, "the English Columba," had not yet landed in Kent—that more famous event occurring thirty-four years later. In this year of 563, the East had not yet awakened to its wonderful dream that to-day has in number more dreamers than the Cross of Christ; for it was not till six years later, when Columba was on a perilous mission

of conversion among the Picts, that Mahomet was born. In 563, when Colum landed on Iona, the young Italian priest who was afterwards to be called the Architect of the Church and to become famous as Pope Gregory the Great, was dreaming his ambitious dreams; and farther East, in Constantinople, then the capital of the Western World, the great Roman Emperor Justinian was laying the foundation of modern law

With the advent of Charlemagne, two hundred years later, "the old world" passed. When the ninth century opened, the great Gregory's dearest hopes were in the dust where his bones lay; Justinian's metropolis was fallen from her pride; and, on Iona, the heathen Danes drank to Odin.

*Page* 136. The *Mor-Rigân.* This euphemerised Celtic queen is called by many names: even those resembling that just given vary much—*Morrigû*, *Mor Reega*, *Morrigan*, *Morgane*, *Mur-ree* (*Mor Ree*), etc. The old word *Mor-Rigan* means "the great queen." She is the mother of the Gaelic Gods, as *Bona Dea* of the Romans. "*Anu* is her name," says an ancient writer. Anu suckled the elder gods. Her name survives in *Tuatha-De-Danann*, in

*Dânu*, *Ana*, and perhaps in that mysterious Scoto-Gaelic name, Teampull *Anait*—the temple of Anait—whom some writers collate with an ancient Asiatic goddess, Anait (see p. 171). It has been suggested that the Celts gave *Bona Dea* to the Romans, for these considered her Hyperborean. A less likely derivation of the popular "*Morrigû*" is that *Mor Reega* is *Mor Reagh* (wealth). Keating, it may be added, speaks of Monagan, Badha, and Macha as the three chief goddesses of the Divine Race of Ana (the Tuatha De Danann). Students of Celtic mythology and legend, and of the Táin-bó-Cuailgne in particular, will remember that her white bull "Find-Bennach" was "antagonist" to the famous brown bull of Cuailgne. The Mor Rigan has been identified with Cybele—as the Goddess of Prosperity: but only speculatively. Another name of the Mother of all Gods is *Aine (Anu?)*. Prof. Rhys says *Ri* or *Roi* was the Mother of the gods of the non-Celtic races. It is suggestive that *Ana* is a Phœnician word: that people had a (virgin?) goddess named *Ana-Perena*.

*Page* 156. *Finn—Oisìn—Oscur—Gaul—Diarmid—Cuchullin.* These names as they stand exhibit the uncertainty of Gaelic name-

spelling. In the case of the first named there is constant variation. The oldest writing is Find (also Fend), or Fin. Some Gaelic writers prefer, in modern use, Fionn. Through a misapprehension, Macpherson popularised the name in Scotland as Fingal, and the *Féin* and *Fianna* (for they are not the same, as commonly supposed, the former being the Clan or People of Finn, and the latter a kind of militia raised for the defence of Uladh), as the Fingalians. Some Irish critics have been severe upon Macpherson's "impossible nomenclature"; but *Fingal* is not "impossible," though it is certainly not old Gaelic for Finn —for the word can quite well stand for Fair Stranger, and might well have been a name given to a Norse (or for that matter a Gaelic) champion.

*Fin MacCumhal* (Fin MacCooal or MacCool) is now commonly rendered as Finn or Fionn. The latter is good Gaelic and the finer word, but the other is older. Fionn obtains more in Gaelic Scotland. *Fingal* and the *Fingalians* are modern, and due solely to the great vogue given by Macpherson—though many writers and even Gaelic speakers have adopted them.

Fionn's famous son, again, is almost universally (outside Gaelic Scotland and Ireland)

known as Ossian, because of Macpherson's spelling of the name. Neither the Highland nor Irish Gaels pronounce it so—but Osh-shen, and the like—best represented by the Gaelic *Oisìn* or Oisein. Personally I prefer Oisìn to any other spelling; but perhaps it would be best if the word were uniformly spelt in the manner in which it is universally familiar. Obviously, too, "Ossianic" is the only suitable use of the name in adjective form. *Oscur* is probably merely a Gaelic spelling of the Norse Oscar; though I recollect a student of ancient Gaelic names telling me that the name was Gaelic and only resembled the familiar Scandinavian word. *Gaul* is commonly so spelt; but Goll is probably more correct. *Diarmid* has many variations, from Diarmuid to Dermid; but Diarmid is the best English equivalent both in sound and correctness.

It is still a moot point as to whether in narration, Gaelic names should be given as they are, or be anglicised—or Gaelic exclamations to phrases in their original spelling, or more phonetically to an English ear. I think it should depend on circumstances, and within the writer's tact. I have myself been taken to task again and again, by critics eager with the eagerness of little knowledge,

for partial anglicisation of names and presumed mistakes in Gaelic spelling, when, surely, the intention was obvious that a compromise was being attempted. Let me give an example. How would the English reader like a story of, say, a Donald Macintyre and a Grace Maclean and an Ivor Mackay if these names were given in their Gaelic form, as Domnhuil Mac-an-t-Saoir and Giorsal nic Illeathain and Imhir Mac Aodh—or even if simple names, like, say, Meave and Malvina, were given as Medb or Malmhin?

It is a pity there is not one recognised way of spelling the legendary name of Setanta, the chief hero of the Gaelic chivalry. Probably the best rendering is Cuchulain. The old form is Cuculaind. But colloquially the name in Gaelic is called Coohoolin or Coohullun; and so Cuculaind would mislead the ordinary reader. The Scottish version is generally Cuchullin—the *ch* soft: a more correct rendering of the Macphersonian Cuthullin, a misnomer responsible no doubt for the common mistake that the Coolin (Cuthullin) mountains in Skye have any connection with the great Gaelic hero (see p. 155). Setanta, a prince of Uladh, was taught for a time in the art of weaponry by one Culain or Culaind, and after a certain famous act of prowess became

known as The Hound of Culain—*Cu* being a hound, whence Cuculain, or with the sign of the genitive, Cuchulain. Every variation of the name, and all the legends of the Cuchullin cycle, will be found in Miss Eleanor Hull's excellent redaction, published by Mr. Nutt. The interested reader should see also the classical work of O'Curry: the vivid and romantic chronicle of Mr. Standish O'Grady; and the fascinating and scholarly edition of *The Feast of Bricrin*, recently published as the second volume of the Irish Texts Society, by Dr. George Henderson, the most scholarly of Highland specialists.

*Page* 162 *seq.* No one has collected so much material on the subject of St. Michael as Mr. Alexander Carmichael has done. Some of his lore, in sheiling-hymns and fishing-hymns, he has already made widely known, directly and indirectly: but in his forthcoming *Or agus Ob*, already alluded to, there will be found a long and invaluable section devoted to St. Micheil, as also, I understand, one of like length and interest on St. Bride or Briget, the most beloved of Hebridean saints, and herself probably a Christian successor of a much more ancient Brighde, a Celtic deity, it is said, of Song and Beauty

*Page* 181. *Be'al.* I do not think there is any evidence to prove that the Be'al or Bêl often spelt Baal—whose name and worship survive to this day in *Bealltainn* (Beltane), May-day—of Gaelic mythology, is identical with the Phœnician god Baal, though probably of a like significance. The Gaelic name, which may be anglicised into Be'al, signifies "Source of All."

I am inclined to believe that the Be'al or Bêl of the Gaels has his analogue in the Gaulish mythology in *Hesus* (also *Esua*, *Aesus*, and *Heus*), a mysterious (supreme?) god of ancient Gaul, surviving still in Armorican legend. If so, Hesus or Aesus may be identical with the "lost" Gaelic god *Aesar* or *Aes*. *Aesar* means "fire-kindler," whence the Creator. (In this connection I would ask if *Aed*, an ancient Gaelic god of fire, also of death, be identical with (as averred) a still more ancient Greek name of Fire, or God of Fire=*Aed?*). Be'al, the Source of All, may take us back to the Phœnician *Baal:* but the Gaelic *Aes* and the Gaulish *Aesus (Hesus)* take us, with the Scandinavian *Aesir*, further still: to the Persian *Aser*, the Hindoo *Aeswar*, the Egyptian *Asi* (the Sun-bull), and the Etruscan *Aesar*. The *Bhagavat-Gita* says of Aeswar that "he resides in every mortal."

*Pages* 199-203. This section, slightly adapted, is from an unpublished book, in gradual preparation, entitled *The Chronicles of the Sìdhe.*

*Page* 225. *The Culdees.* Though I have alluded in the text to the probable meaning of a word that has perplexed many people, I add this note as I have just come upon another theoretical statement about the Culdees as though they were an oriental race or sect. The writer evidently thinks they are the same as Chaldæans, and builds a startlingly unscientific theory on that assumption. In all probability the word is simply *Cille-Dè*, *i.e.*, [the man of the] Cell of God—*Cille* being Cell, a Church—and so a Cille-Dè man would be "man of God," a monk, a cleric. A much more puzzling problem obtains in the apparent traces of Buddha-worship in the Hebrides. It may or may not be of much account that the author of *Lewisiana* "admits reluctantly" that "we must accept the possibility of a Buddhist race passing north of Ireland." I have not seen *Lewisiana* for some years, and cannot recall on what grounds the author arrives at his conclusion. But from my notes on the subject I see that M. Coquebert-Montbret, in the *Soc. des Antiquaires de*

*France*, argues at great length that the Asiatic Buddhist missionaries who penetrated to Western Europe, reached Ireland and Scotland. He asks if the ancient Gaelic Deity named *Budd* or *Budwas* be not *Buddh* (Buddha). Another French antiquary avers that the Druids were "an order of Eastern priests adoring Buddwas." Some light on the problem is thrown by the fact that the Gaulo-Celtic museum in St. Germain is an ancient Celtic "god"—the fourth in kind that has been found—with its legs crossed after the manner of the Indian Buddha. It is more interesting still to note that in the Hebrides spirits are sometimes called *Boduchas* or *Buddachs*, and that the same word is (or used to be) applied to heads of families, as the Master.

*Pages* 242, 248. These two sections, rearranged, and in part rewritten, are excerpted from what I wrote in Iona, some five years ago, for a preface to *The Sin-Eater*.

*Page* 256. In its original form this was written about a book of great interest and beauty, *The Shadow of Arvor: Legendary Romances of Brittany*. Translated and retold by Edith Wingate Rinder.

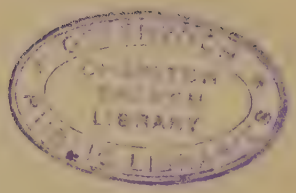
*Arvor (or Armor)* is one of the bardic

equivalents of *Armorica*, as Brittany is called in many old tales. The name means the Sea-Washed Land, *Vor* or *Mor* being Breton for "sea," as in the famous region *Morbihan* the Little Sea. Neither the Bretons for their Cymric kindred, however, call Brittany *Arvor*, or the Latinised *Armorica*. Arvor is the poetic name of a portion of Basse Bretagne only. Bretons call Brittany *Breiz*, and their language *Brezoned*, and themselves *Breiziaded* (singular *Breiziad*)—as they keep to the French differentiation of *Bretagne* and *Grande Bretagne* in *Bro-Zaos*, the Saxon-Land, as they speak of France (beyond Brittany), as *Bro-chall*, the Land of Gaul. In Gaelic I think Brittany is always spoken of as *Breatunn-Beag*, Little Britain. The Welsh call the country, its people, and language, *Llydaw*, *Llydawiaid*, *Llydawaeg*.

F. M.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

By Mrs. William Sharp

The first edition of *The Divine Adventure: Iona: By Sundown Shores* was published in 1900 by Messrs. Chapman and Hall. The Titular Essay (since revised) appeared first in *The Fortnightly Review* for November and December, 1899. A large portion of "Iona" (though in different sequence) appeared also in *The Fortnightly*, March and April, 1900. Both "spiritual histories" were published separately in book form in America by Mr. T. Mosher; "Iona," curtailed and rearranged under the title of "The Isle of Dreams," in 1905. The Essay "Celtic" in its original form, first printed in *The Contemporary Review*, will now be found, revised and materially added to, in *The Winged Destiny*. In this Uniform Edition of the writings of "Fiona Macleod" (William Sharp) the following stories, etc., have been transferred to the present volume: "The White Fever" and "The Smoothing of the Hand" from *The Sin-Eater*; "The White Heron" which relates to the earlier story of Mary Maclean in *Pharais*, is from *The Dominion of Dreams*, and in its earliest version appeared with illustrations in the Christmas number of *Harper* in 1898. "A Dream" appeared first in the *Theosophical Review* of September, 1904. Finally I have added to this volume the latter portion and some detached fragments from *Green Fire*, a

Romance by "Fiona Macleod" dealing with Brittany and the Hebrid Isles and published in 1896 by Messrs. A. Constable, and in America by Messrs. Harper Bros. But William Sharp considered that the book suffered from grave defects of design and construction and decided that, when out of print, it should not be republished. "The Herdsman," however, is—as he stated in a note to the first Edition of *The Dominion of Dreams*, "a re-written and materially altered version of the Hebridean part of *Green Fire* of which book it is all I care to preserve." Nevertheless, in accordance with the wishes of several friends, I have very willingly put together a series of detached fragments from the book and placed them beside "The Herdsman" as, in our opinion equally worthy of preservation, since the author's prohibition precludes the possibility of reprinting the book in its entirety.